

Positive Psychology: Its emergence, Assumptions and goals

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Positive Psychology: A very short history with a very long past

- Since world war II Psychology focused on human problems and how to remedy them.
- DSM and ICD sponsored by WHO(1990)gave rise to family of reliable assessment strategies.
- Positive Psychology proposes to challenge the disease model.
- It focuses as much on strengths as on weaknesses; building the strengths and repairing the worst (Seligman,2002)

Positive Psychology

- A science of well-being and **optimal functioning**. (Martin Seligman and Mihaly,2000)
- Focuses on "**what's right** about people" instead of "what's wrong with people".
- A shift from the notion of mental diseases and healing to **personal growth**; average or normal to the ideal or upper limits of human potentiality.
- A scientific study of the **strengths and virtues** that enable individuals and communities to thrive.
- Positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of **people, groups, and institutions**.
- The scientific study of what makes **life most worth living**

Assumptions of Positive Psychology

- Human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder and distress.Its time to challenge the disease model(**Maddux,2002**)
- Human beings have the potential for good and that we are motivated to pursue a good life (**Linley and Joseph,2006**)
- Shift from fixed mindset to growth mindset; solution focused rather than problem focused.
- There are several emperical studies to support the assumptions of Positive Pstchology.

Some research findings

- **There is a paradigm shift from misery studies to happiness studies.** (*Seligman2000;Diener1984*)
- **Happy people see bright side of affairs , pray and directly struggle with problems.** (*Mc Crae & Costa 1986*)
- **Happy people are involved in goal activities which they value.** (*Emmons, 1986*)
- **Happiness can be increased by believing in a larger meaning or force in the universe.** (*Ellison 1991; pollner 1989*)

History of Positive Psychology

- Many philosophers, religious figures and theologians – Jesus ,Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and many others posed deep questions about the meaning of good life and its attainment.
- Positive Psychologists do not claim to have invented the notion of happiness and well being, rather to give an umbrella term to a field of inquiry related to things which make life worth living.

Contd....

- Rogers(1951)- Fully functioning person
- Jahoda (1958)- Mental health
- Allport(1961)- Mature individuality
- Erikson(1963)- Stages of development
- Maslow(1954-1971)-Self actualization
- Vaillant(1977)- Positive defenses &exceptional performance.
- Deci &Ryan(1985)- Self Determination Theory
- Csikszentmihalyi (1990)- Flow-optimal experience
- Ryff & Singer(1996)- Psychological well being
- Seligman(1991-2006)- Learned helplessness,optimism,authentic happiness

FAQs of Positive Psychology

- Is Positive Psychology Happiness?
- What is the relationship between Positive Psychology and Humanistic Psychology?
- Is Po. Psy. anything more than what we know from common sense?
- Are Positive psychologists indifferent to sufferings?
- Is Po. Psy. A luxury?
- Is Po. Psy. value laden?
- Is rest of Psychology negative?
- Is this a paradigm shift?
- Do you have to be happy to be positive psychologist?

Goals of Positive Psychology

- Building of positive qualities at three levels - Subjective, Individual, Collective.
- Areas of research : Pleasant life (Life of enjoyment)
Good life (Life of engagement)
Meaningful life (Life of affiliation)
- Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV) Manual of Positive Psychology
- Acknowledges six main virtues in the cultivation of happiness-
Wisdom and knowledge
Courage
Humanity
Justice
Temperance
Transcendence

Classification of Virtues(Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

1. **Wisdom and Knowledge** :Creativity ,Curiosity, Open-mindedness, Love of Learning, Perspective
2. **Courage** : Bravery, Persistence ,Integrity, Vitality/Zest
3. **Humanity** :Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence
4. **Justice** : Citizenship ,Fairness, Leadership
5. **Temperance** : Forgiveness and mercy, Humility/Modesty, Prudence, Self- regulation
6. **Transcendence** : Appreciation of beauty and excellence ,Gratitude, Hope ,Humour, Spirituality.

Criteria of character strengths as satisfying

- Strength needs to be manifested in the range of an individual's behaviour
- Strength contributes to good life for self and others.
- Each strength is morally valued even in the absence of beneficial outcomes
- Strengths inspire others to develop their own strengths
- Society provides institutions for cultivating strengths
- Character strengths of a person are his cardinal traits

Outcome of signature strengths

- Acceptance of self and others
- A feeling of excitement
- Well-being
- Life satisfaction
- Happiness
- Higher work performance
- Recovery from illness
- Post traumatic growth
- Transcendental leadership traits
- Healthy family and communities

Happiness and Positive Psychology

- The concept of happiness is the cornerstone of Positive Psychology
- Two main theoretical perspectives to understand happiness:
 - Hedonic
 - Eudaimonic
- Positive Psychology view happiness from both perspectives

Happiness

- All of us want to be happy
- Happiness means different to different people
- Positive Psychologists are interested in finding out the unique ways to make people happy
- Positive psychologists talk about achieving happiness with the help of savoring (subjective)
- Ten techniques for savoring have been suggested by Bryant(2006)

Techniques of Savoring

PRESENT

- Get absorbed in the moment
- Remind yourself of how quickly the time flies
- Sharpen your sensory perception
- Shout it from the rooftops
- Compare the outcome with something worse
- Avoid killing yourself

PAST

- Take a mental photograph(visualization)
- Share your good feelings with others
- Count your blessings and give thanks
- Congratulate yourself

FUTURE

- Anticipate the upcoming good event

Let us think??

- Is happiness a feeling or a thought?
- Which orientation of time(past, present or future) can lead us to maximum happiness?
- Is happiness a goal or journey?
- Despite the usage of advanced science and technology in our life, the level of our internal happiness has gone up or down? why?

Insight from Indian Scriptures

- Happiness is the quality of soul not the body.
- It is not dependency; comes from freedom(ignorance, fear, greed, attachment, jealousy and ego).
- it is our decision or choice.
- We are representing God on earth.
- A balanced time perspective generates happiness.
- Happiness is a journey.

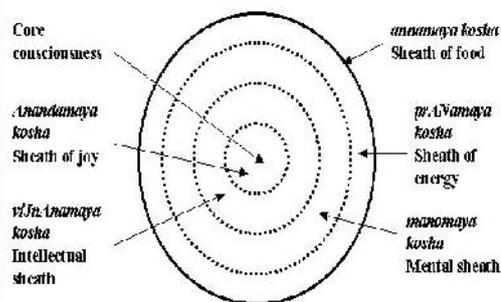
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- Spirituality can shift our focus from external to internal
- Happiness comes from feeling of security
- Happiness comes from purity
- Happiness comes from true self knowledge

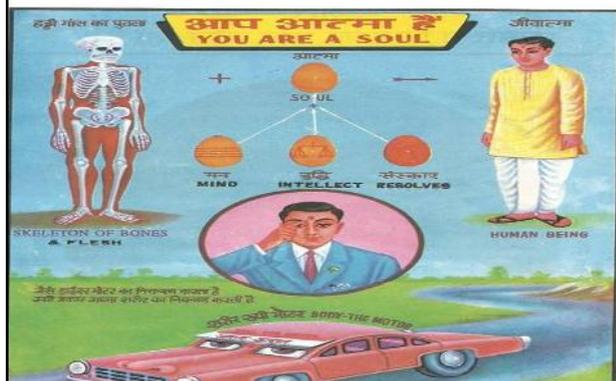
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- Who am I?
- What is the meaning and purpose of my life?
- Where I am going?
- Am I truly happy?

'Koshas' within the human body



आत्मा क्या है और मन क्या है?



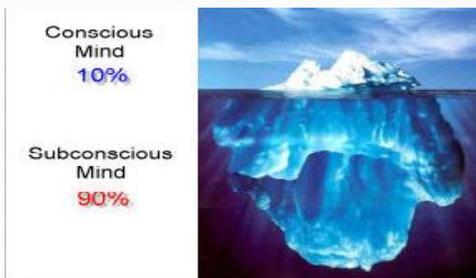
God Spot

- There is a God Spot in the human brain.
- The area is located among neural connections in the temporal lobes of the brain.
- Scans show that these neural areas light up whenever a subject is exposed to discussion of spiritual topics.
- God Spot is culture specific.

How to develop SQ?

- Develop self-awareness.
- Be positive and creative.
- Explore possibilities to go forward
- Get comfortable with paradox.
- Feel strongly that I want to change.
- Ponder the problem of pain.
- Discover and dissolve obstacles (reframing).
- Commit to a path but be prepared to change it.
- Live to serve.
- Cultivate spiritual practices.

Power of Subconscious Mind



Techniques of developing SQ

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Visualization
- Positive self talk
- Reading spiritual books
- Challenging dysfunctional beliefs about God, Self, Others and life.

Cultivating positive thinking

- Positive thinking is about seeing the positive situations in life.
- Positive thinking help reduce stress, improve health and leads to more happiness.
- It does not mean to ignore negative events rather to look for opportunities/challenges.
- Positive thinking works through positive self talk

Negative self talk

- Thinking of the worst
- Magnifying the worst
- Take everything personally
- Its either black or white

Here we are.....



Insaan kehta hai, khushi aaye to
main muskurau
Aur
Khushi kehti hai,
Tum muskaraao to mein aau...

Thank
you

Phir milenge.....