

Positive Psychology – Lecture 1

Tal Ben-Shahar

Hi Good morning. It's wonderful to be back here. Wonderful to see you here. I'm teaching this class because I wish a class like this had been taught when I was sitting in your seat as an undergrad here. This does not mean it is a class you wish to be taught, nor does it mean that it is the right class for you. But I hope to doing the next couple of lectures is giving you an idea what this class is about so that you can decide whether or not it is for you. I came here in 1992 And then I had a mini epiphany half way through my sophomore year. I realized that I was in a wonderful place with wonderful students around me, wonderful teachers. I was doing well academically. I was doing well in athletics. I was playing squash at that time. I was doing well socially. Everything was going well.

Except for the fact. That I was unhappy. And I didn't understand why. It was then in a matter of moments, that I decided that I had to find out why and become happier.

And that was when I switched my concentration from computer science to philosophy and psychology with a single question: how can I become happier? Over time I did become happier. What contributed most to my happiness was when I encountered a new emerging field But essentially research that falls under or within the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology, studying it, applying the ideas to my life has made me significantly happier. It continues to make me happier. And it was when I realized the impact that it had on me that I decided to share it with others. That's when I decided that I wanted to be a teacher and teach in this field. So this is positive psychology, psychology 1504. And we'll be exploring this new, relatively new and fascinating field. And hopefully, we will be exploring more than the field ourselves.

When I first taught this class that was back in 2002, I taught it at a seminar and had eight students. Two dropped out. That left me with six. The year after, the class became slightly larger. I had over three hundred students. And then third year when I taught it which was the last time, I had 850 students in the class, making it at that point the largest course at Harvard. And that's when the media became interested. Because they wanted to understand why. They wanted to understand this phenomenon that "here you have a class, that's larger than Introduction to Economics". How could that be? So I was invited by the media for interviews, whether it was newspapers, radio, television. And I started to notice a pattern during those interviews. So I would walk into the interview. We would have the interview. And afterwards, the producer or the interviewer would walk me out and say something to the effects of "well thank you Tal for the interview. But you know I expected you to be different".

And I would ask, as nonchalant as I could of course. I didn't really care but had to ask anyway,

"how different?" And they would say, "Well you know, we expected you to be more outgoing." Next interview, the end of the interview, same thing. "Thank you for doing the interview. But you know Tal, I expected you to be

different." And once again, nonchalant of course. "Well you know, we expected you to be less, less introverted." Next interview, same thing. "How different?" "Well, you know, more extroverted. More outgoing." Next interview. "Well, you know, less shy." Coz I get very nervous in interviews.

Interview after interview, literally dozens. More outgoing, more cheerful. Less introverted, more extroverted. And on and on. But here is the best one. So this is one of the local channels here around Boston. I was going to the interview. We had a quite long interview, which I thought was actually pretty good. And at the end of the interview, the interviewer is a very jolly guy. He walks me out and puts his hands on my shoulder, and says, "thank you very much for doing the interview." And then the usual comes. "But you know Tal, I expected you to be different." And I said, "How different?" Just so you understand, by this time, my self-esteem is short. But still with some resemblance of nonchalance I asked, "how different?" And he looks at me and says, "Well I don't know Tal. I expected you to be taller." Taller? What? Five seven, well ok five six and a half is not enough to teach happiness? And I thought about it. I thought about it a lot. The whole pattern from the beginning.

And I think I understand why they expected someone different. You see they had to explain to themselves as well as the audience, "how come this lecture is larger than the Introduction to Economics?" And the way to explain it must be that the teacher is very outgoing, extremely charismatic, very cheerful and extrovert and of course, tall. Well, there is one L missing there. But... Yeah. If only. So the problem though is that they were looking in the wrong place for the explanation. In other words, they were looking at the messenger. What they needed to look at was the message. Now how do I know that? You see because I see other positive psychology classes on other campuses around the country and around the world.

There are over 200 hundred campuses here in United States that teach positive

psychology. On almost every campus where this class is taught, it's either one of the or the largest class. It's about the message. I see more and more organizations taking up positive psychology in their, as consultant companies, some of them the leading big consultant companies are taking it on. More and more high schools are introducing positive psychology class. ***** Elementary schools are introducing it. The governments around the world are expressing interest in this new emerging field. Why? Because it works. Because it really works. You see this whole realm on life flourishing, on happiness, on well-being has been until recently dominated by the self-health movement. What do we have in the self-health movement? We have books that are very interesting, that are very accessible. We have speakers who are very outgoing, very charismatic and tall, attracting the masses into these workshops, seminars and lectures. But, there

is a very big "but" here. Many of these books, many of these workshops and seminars lack substance. Very often, overpromising and under-delivering.

So these are five things you need to know to be happy. The three things to be the great leader. The one secret of success, happiness and a perfect love life. Overpromising. Under-delivering. On the other hand, we have academia. What do we have in academia? We have a lot of rigor, a lot of substance. We have data analyzed, reanalyzed and meta-analyzed. Things that actually work, good stuff. But, and there is also a very big "but" here. Very few people read refereed academic journals. I mean Think about it: how many people outside this room of course have read the last twelve issues of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology? Most people don't even know what that means. The head of my PHD programs actually estimated the average academic journal article is read by seven people. You know... And that includes the author's mother. So you know I say half in jest but it's actually really sad. Because...certainly sad for me, as an academic. Because these things are good. They

But not accessible to most people. And this is where positive psychology comes in. And this is also where this class comes in. The explicit mandate of positive psychology as well as of this class is to create a bridge between Ivory tower and mainstreet. In other words, it is to bring the rigor, the substance, the empirical foundation, the science from academia and merge it with accessibility of the self-help or New Age movement.

In a way the best of both worlds. And this explains the popularity of the field of positive psychology: science that works. This class will be taught on two levels. The first level it will be taught as any other class in psychology or any of the classes you've taken here. You'll be introduced here to studies, to research, to rigorous academic work. You'll be writing paper, academic paper. You'll be taking exams. Just like every other class. But then it will also be taught at the second level, which is for every paper that you'll read, every paper that you'll write, you'll always be thinking, "Ok, how can I take these ideas and apply them to my life? How can I apply them to my relationship? How can I apply them to my community?" Two levels. The academic. Applied. I did not just introduce whether it's in the readings or in the lectures ideas just because they are interesting for the sake of the idea. It is always an idea that is both rigorous and can be applied. Just a few words about housekeeping.

Some of the questions that I have already received from you before the class started. So this, unfortunately, is the last time that I am teaching positive psychology or any other class for that matter at Harvard. Hopefully within two years, probably not next year, but within two years, there will be positive psychology class offered, but I certainly cannot guarantee it. About feedback and questions. If you have any questions, anything that's not clear, if you agree or disagree with something, email me or email your TF (Teaching Fellow at Harvard, just like TA at other schools) and we'll

to it publicly. Always anonymously. Unless you specified specifically that your name can be mentioned. Sometimes you may be listening to a lecture and then half way through it there is an emergency. There is something that you really have to ask, something that cannot wait. In that case, please just put your hand up. Coz it's just like when you have to go to the bathroom. Just can't stop. Can't wait. And when you gotta go, you gotta go. So we'll take a positive psychology break for that. And just stop me half way through and I'll answer any question. All the power points, as well as the videos of the classes will be online. Will be available within couple of days. Well the power points will be available before, say for this lecture it will be before so that you can use them in class. The videos, unfortunately, cannot be made available before. We tried. Couldn't figure it out. So it will be available within a day or two after.

And the reason why they are up there. First of all, I do prefer that you attend lecture. I do prefer that you are physically here. You get things in the energy of the room with so many students so you wouldn't just get from your computer. The reason why I do put them up is so that you have the opportunity if you want to see it again or if you have to miss a class. That's perfectly fine. And also because, and this is also the reason why the power points are always available, I want you to be engaged in the material. I want you to be engaged in whatever it is that we are discussing in class. Not necessarily thinking about getting down every word that I say on paper, remembering everything, memorizing everything. I want you to take rather than passive notes of writing down what is on the power point or every word that I say. I'd like you to take active notes. And that means being engaged with the material. For example, if you heard something and idea and you say, "Oh, that's interesting." Star it. Write it down. Or "Ok I think I'll start applying this." Write it down. "Or I want to tell my mom about this later." Or "I want to talk to my roommates or my team about this idea." Write it down. Active note-taking is opposed to passive note-taking for two reasons.

First of all, as I said, this class is a class about making a difference in people's lives. I would not be teaching the class just for its academic beauty, although there is a lot of academic beauty in this field. So write down if you have an idea that you think you can apply. The second reason why we should that is because you'll remember more. Better attention, better understanding of the material if you are actively engaged, as opposed to just taking down passive notes. Throughout the class, starting next week, we'll take what I called, "time-ins" as opposed to "time-outs". it's like a time-out. It's the time where we stop the class and you look inward. And this is literally a time of silence in a class.

I will stop for a minute or two. And you'll have a chance either to just stare at me or anyone else, or think about what we've just discussed, or have a guiding question that I will provide you that you'll address during the class. The reason why I have "Time-ins"... This is something that I am introducing this year for the first time. We didn't have it last time. It's because over the last two years since I last taught it, I've done a lot work in the area of silence. I've read a lot of research in this area about the importance of quiet times whether it's in a class, in a lecture, whether it is at

home, whether it is for a leader in the business, for relationship, for children starting from pre-schools. Now many of you, as you are going through these "time-ins" if you decide to take this class may think, "Well, is this what I'm paying 40,000 dollars a year for? To sit a class and be quiet?" First of all, it will only be a minute or two at a time, maybe once or twice a lecture. But second, it is maybe the most important thing you'll take from this class. The notion of embracing stillness. Let me read to you an excerpt from a study that was run by two MIT professors. By the way, all the names that I read and that are not on the power points, you don't need to remember or write down. This is just for your edification.

So David Foster and Matthew Wilson. Both of them are from MIT. Indeed the

following study that I think confirms the importance of "time-in", time to look inside. What they did is they scanned the brains of rats while they were in a maze and after they went through the maze. And here's what they found. "What the results suggest is that while there certainly is some record of your experience as it is occurring. in other words when they were doing the maze, when you try to figure out: 'What was important? What should I keep and throw away?' during periods of quiet wakeful introspection. What they show was rats who went through the maze and went through the maze again and again, learned far less than rats who took time aside, chilled out a little bit after a maze, had more margarita. Experience, embrace stillness. This has implications and they showed implications to human beings as well. Not only those of the rat race, all human beings. So what they say is that "replay might constitute a general mechanism of learning and memory". Both learning, understanding, as well as memory, retention. When we reflect, when we replay the material, we are much more likely to retain, to remember what we have just been through. So the importance of time aside cannot be over-emphasized.

In his wonderful book of teaching, Parker Palmer-- it's called *The Courage to Teach*, says the following-- Words are not the sole medium of exchange in teaching and learning. We educate with silence as well. Silence gives us a chance to reflect on what we have said and heard. In authentic education, silence is treated as a trustworthy matrix for the inner work students must do, a medium for learning of the deepest sort." Silence is something that is missing from our culture. I know that many of you have probably read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert M. Pirsig. He had a second book out, less well-known, called *Lila* (*Lila: an Inquiry into Morals*). And *Lila* is an anthropological study of Native Americans. And one of the distinguishing characteristics between these two cultures is their approach were silence. What he found was when he went and sat around with Native Americans.

They would sit around the fire and hang out for two, three hours without saying a word. Just sit around. Look at one another. Smile. Have a good time. Introspect. Just be there for hours. While he points out that in our culture we feel very uncomfortable with the absence of words, with the absence of sound or noise. We have to fill up all the gaps. This is an important cultural difference. And we pay a price for this lack of stillness. A price that we'll talk about a lot, when I talk about relationships, when I talk about virtue and morality and when we talk about happiness and

wellbeing in general. Let me give a little bit background on positive psychology: how we came about and how this class came about. In many ways, positive psychology is the brainchild, the product and the grandchild of humanistic psychology. What we have in humanistic psychology is essentially a reaction to the existing psychologies of the time. The founders, considered the founders of humanistic psychology in fact called it "the third force". Why the "third force"?

Because the first force was behaviorism. The work of Skinner (B. F. Skinner), the work of Watson (John B. Watson), the work of Thorndik (Edward Thorndik). This was the first force. The second force was psychoanalysis. The work of Freud (Sigmund Freud), Jung (Carl Jung), Adler (Alfred Adler) to some extent. This was the second force. And the third force, humanistic psychology came as a reaction to it. First it is a reaction to behaviorism. Behaviorism looks at the human entity, at the person as basically a collection of behaviors as a box, like a billiard ball knocked around by reinforcements, by punishment, by reward. And what humanistic psychology said was that we are much more than a billiard ball being knocked around. We have spirit. We have a soul. We have cognitions and thoughts that matter. It's not just behavior that is important for understanding as well as improving life. And then psychoanalysis, the second force. The psychoanalysis is about basically understanding mostly through the subconscious: that's how you understand it; that's how you improve the quality of life. There are defense mechanisms, there are biological

instincts, neurosis-- and if you understand these very often dark forces, were better able to deal with life: understand as well as improve the quality of life.

Humanistic psychology says human beings are much more than that. Much more than biological instincts, much more than neurosis, much more than the person who exists in a Newtonian reality like a billiard ball. We need to value much more the human being. We need to give much more dignity and freedom to the person. There was a problem. The problem was humanistic psychology is said lacked the rigorous methodology. While it brought in many wonderful ideas, talked about the study of well-being, talked about the study of optimism, of kindness, of morality, of virtue, of love, of relationships, of peak experiences, of self-actualization, of empathy. All these wonderful concepts that we'll talk about throughout the semester. It wasn't as rigorous about its epistemology, about how we form ideas and how we learn. And that's why, in many ways, largely, not completely but largely more of into the self-health movement. Interesting ideas, good ideas, important ideas, certainly good intentions, but to some extent, without the academic rigor. And that's why it lacked the impact on academia. That's why we don't have partly any humanistic psychology classes offered in universities today. There are very few still around. And this is why also a lot of it became the New Age essentially. But still, it's humanistic psychology that has in many ways fathered and mothered, as we'll see, positive psychology. So let's meet the grandparents.

People like Rollo May. People like Carl Rogers. And more than anyone, Abraham Maslow. Was the American Psychological Association President. Was the professor

just down the road here at Brandeis (Brandeis University). And he introduced this humanistic psychology in 1954. He wrote a chapter, called "Toward the Positive Psychology". 1954. In it he said we need to also research kindness, goodness and happiness and optimism. In many ways it was way ahead of his time.

Then if Maslow is the grandfather, then Karen Horney is the grandmother. Initially a psychoanalyst, trained through the works of Freud, she realized the focuses had been too much on the negative-- on neurosis, on psychosis and said we also, not only but also have to focus on what is working on human organism. We have to work and look at the fine qualities and cultivate those. Because part of being human is being those things as well. In many ways, brought about the movement toward humanistic psychology and through that-- positive psychology. Aaron Antonovsky, the third person I would consider the grandfather, brought in the idea of focusing on health. He has a new concept. Or he introduced a new concept. I'm still here. Don't worry. He introduced a new concept, which he called-- his own neologism, "salutogenesis". Salutogenesis: saluto--(which is) health; geneis (which is) origin. The origin of health. And this was an alternative model, to the conventional ways model of pathologies. So instead of just studying pathologies whether it's in physical health or psychological health, we should also study the origin of health. In many ways that is what prevented medicine is about. So this was a novel idea back in 1970s when he introduced it. And we'll talk a lot about Aaron Antonovsky. Now the parents.

Martin Seligman, considered the father of the positive psychology, network of scholars, started the field in 1998. Like Maslow, he too, was the President of American Psychological Association. And as his mandate, during his presidency, he had two aims: the first aim-- to make academic psychology more accessible, -- in other words-- bridge Ivory tower and mainstreet. This was the first aim of his presidency. The second aim was introduce a positive psychology. A psychology that will look at also things that work, that were not just study-- depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and neurosis. A psychology a network of scholars who will focus on -- love, relationships, self-esteem, motivation, resilience and well-being. And he introduced these ideas and it's all been literally uphill from then. Before Martin Seligman, this all happened in 1998 and we'll talk about it a little bit more next time.

This all happened in 1998. Long before 1998, our very own professor Ellen Langer did research in all these areas, bringing the humanistic spirit and combining it with the academic scientific rigor. We'll be talking probably more than any other scholar about her work in this class. And another person from Harvard, one of the parents of positive psychology was Philip Stone, who passed away two years ago, yesterday. Both Langer and Stone were my physicist advisors, introduced me to the field of positive psychology into this research. In 1998 when I had the first positive psychology summit, Professor Stone took me along with him. I was a graduate student.

In 1999 he taught the first positive psychology class at Harvard, one of the first in the world. I was his teaching fellow. A couple of years later, he taught it again. Again I was his teaching fellow.

And then when I graduated, he suggested I take over his class. And here we are today. So this is 1504. Let me give you a sense of, in the next half an hour and so, a sense of what you expect in this class. The first thing is this class is not just about information, it is also explicitly about transformation. What do I mean by that? You see most of education today is about information. What is information? So we have a container, which is our mind. And information is about taking data, taking science, taking information and putting it inside the form. That is information. Now when this form is filled, that's when we are educated. More information, more data, better. Not enough. Because it's not just information that determines our wellbeing, our success, our self-esteem, our motivational level, the relationship and the quality of our relationships. It's much more than information. Transformation is about taking this form and changing it. Trans, (which is) change, form, (which is) shape. Change the form. This is transformation. This is the distinction that I learned first from at the school.

Professor Robert Kegan who taught about this. Information in and of itself is not

enough. Think about this example. You go for an athletic meet. Your aim is to get into the top three-- to be a medalist. You come in number eight. What's the analysis? What's the interpretation? -- Terrible. I just failed. You feel deflated. Enervated. On the other hand, the exact same event. You came eight when you expected to be top three. You can interpret it as "Ok, so what have I learned? I need to work even harder." You become more energized. You learned from the experience. In other words, the same objective information which is "I got eighth; I expected top three". The same information, very different interpretation. One is a disaster, the other interpretation is an opportunity. One leads to loss of energy, the other one to increasing energy. Or think about another very common example. We know of many people around the world who seemingly have everything, who are doing well, who have more than they need. And yet they are unhappy.

And then there are people around the world who have very little. And yet they never cease, never stop to celebrate life. And we have another way around as well. People who have everything and appreciate it and enjoy life. People who have very little and who see themselves as victim. In other words, it's not just the information that goes in. It's also the shape, the interpretation, the perception, the focus. And that is determined by the shape of the form. This is what I realized when I was an undergrad here. Seemingly, looking in from the outside, I had everything. Doing well (in) sports, academics and socially. And yet my perception, my focus, my interpretation of life-- not that great. I wasn't happy. The interpretation matters very often a lot more as we'll see than the information that goes in. One of the sentences that I'll repeat throughout the class is that happiness is much more contingent on our state of mind than our status or the state of our bank account. And that's where transformation comes in. And that's why it's so important for wellbeing. What that will look like in practice is that we'll cover not so much information. We'll uncover much more and I don't mean that in the Berkeley (George Berkeley) sense of the word.

I mean that in the academic sense of the word. In other words, what we'll do is uncover potential that we have inside, that we have inside of us all along. Maybe we just didn't see. Or maybe it's obscured by something or another. We'll uncover it so that we can utilize it, so that we can focus on it, so that we can perceive it. Here is a story just to illustrate it. So this is Michelangelo.

One day he was asked by a journalist of his time, "how did you create this most amazing masterpiece, David?", to which Michelangelo responded, "it was easy. I went to the quarry. I saw this huge piece of marble. And in it I saw David. All I needed to do was to chip away the excess stone, to get rid of the marble that shouldn't have been there. And when I got rid of this excess stone, there was David. " Not obviously easier said than done. But the story captured the metaphor of what this class very much is about. It's about chipping away the excess stone. It's about getting rid of limitations, of barriers, whether it's the fear of failure, something that we didn't have as kids. But today most people in our culture have it. It's about chipping away perfectionism that is debilitating and often hurts us. It's about chipping away our ability for success, because maybe we are afraid of success. Maybe we feel guilty about some of the things that we have in our life, and that in turn limits us. Maybe it's about chipping away the limitations on our relationships in while we don't thrive within them.

This is what this class is mostly about. As Dero (?) says, "soul grows more by subtraction than by addition", by getting rid of these limitations, limitations that are preventing us from fulfilling our potential. Because our potential is in there in nature. We talk a lot about human nature. It's there whether it's through God, whether it's through evolution. We have a lot of potential that over time with we fix (?) stone of voices with being part of our culture that very often these limitations are put on top of us just like the excess stone. Lao Tzu, "In pursuit of knowledge every day something is acquired. In pursuit of wisdom, every day something is dropped." Knowledge is

about information. Wisdom is about transformation. I was recently interviewed for a newsletter on coaching before a large conference on the topic. And the interviewer asked me, "So what tips, what tools can you give from positive psychology?"

So I talked about some of "the greatest hits": the importance of gratitude, the importance of physical exercise. I talked about the importance of spending time on our relationships, about taking time aside and simplifying and so on and so on. As I was going through my long list, she stopped me and she said, "You know Tal, this is all good. The importance of stuff, I know. But our readers already know that. I am looking for the Wow factor. Come on, surprise me. What can you tell our readers?" And I thought about this question for a minute and I realized that there is no Wow. And I told her that, "you know if there is a wow, the wow is that there is no wow." That's it. Because the over-not-transformation emperor, the emperor of quick fixes has no clothes.

It doesn't exist. it's over-promising and under-delivering. A life, a fulfilling life, a rich life includes

ups and downs, includes pain and getting up again, includes failure and getting up again. It includes success and celebrating it. Victories and losses, ups and downs, as we'll talk about next week. It's not about this one secret. One Wow to the good life. And many of the things you will learn in this class, you've heard of before. Probably nothing new to you. You already know it inside of you. And you are going to say, "Well, it is common sense." And yes, a lot of it is common sense. However, it is Voltaire once said, "Common sense is not that common." And this especially applies to application. So the aim of this class is to make common sense more common, especially in the real world application. At the end of the class, here's what I am hoping for, at the end of the class, if you decide to take it.

At the end of the semester, I don't think—I am not expecting you to come and tell me, "Wow! Thank you for teaching me so many new things." That's not what I am

expecting. I don't think that is what will happen. What I hope will happen is for you to come and say, rather than "thank you for teaching me", something you would say "thank you for reminding me of something that I've already known". And this is what this class is about. It's constant reminder, twice a week. Constant reminder of what you already know, of what is inside you. The David that is inside you. And what this class will hopefully do is to help you chip away some of these limitations, whether it's limitation, cognitive limitations that prevent you from seeing what you already knew, emotional limitations that are preventing you from deriving the benefits of what you already know, or behavioral limitations. The ABC: affect, behavior, and cognition that we'll talk about during the change week. So I'm making common sense more common. Information in and of itself is simply not enough. It's not enough and what we need in addition to our information highway is a transformation highway. Transformation high way, or transformation back roads, to come through the fast increasing pace. Because as we'll talk about next time, rates of depression are on the rise, rates of anxiety are on the rise, not just in this country, globally. It's literally global epidemic. And to deal with it, more information will just not do. Just not enough.

Here is Archibald MacLeish. He was a poet, was a Harvard professor, "What is wrong is not the great discoveries of science-- information is always better than ignorance, no matter what information or what ignorance. What is wrong is the belief behind the information, the belief that information will change the world. It won't." Just adding it and filling up our containers with more and more stuff. More and more information, more and more data. It's just not enough. We need more than that. This class will take a humanistic approach. Let me read you a quick excerpt by Abraham Maslow who talks about this approach, "If one took a course or picked up a book on the psychology of learning, most of it, in my opinion, would be beside the point - that is, beside the 'humanistic' point. Most of it would present learning as the acquisition

character, to the human personality, to the person himself." External refers to information. Internal refers to the transformation, the changing of the form. And when we talk about transformation, actually mean it quite literally-- changing of the form, changing of the brain as we'll talk about. We'll talk about meditation for instance.

We know our brain today can actually change through MRI studies since 1998. A new concept came up which is Neurogenesis or Neuroplasticity, meaning our brain actually changes and transforms. It changes its form throughout our life. So I don't just mean it metaphorically, I also very often mean it literally. Abraham Maslow continues, "Humanistic philosophy offers a new conception of learning, of teaching, and of education. Stated simply, such a concept holds that the function of education, the goal of education—the human goal, the humanistic goal, the goal so far as human beings are concerned—is ultimately the "self-actualization" of a person, the becoming fully human, the development of the fullest height that the human species can stand up to or that the particular individual can come to.

In a less technical way, it is helping the person to become the best that he is able to become." And this was before the Ad came up for the army. That "Be all you can be." This is what the class is about. It's the humanistic approach. It's about fulfilling our potential, chipping away those limitations. Now to many of you this may sound naive, idealistic. Naive it is not. Idealistic, it is. And we'll talk about and discuss the importance of idealism and maintaining idealism if we are to introduce personal change, inter-personal change, or community or society change. This class is not about providing answers, concerning the good life and happiness. It is about identifying the right questions. "Ask and ye shall you receive", say the Scripture. This class is what I think education is all about, which is that the quest for information and transformation must begin with the question. Quest, question, there is no coincidence that there is an etymological link between the two. In this class we'll be asking, you'll

be asked many questions, questions that as you'll see, create reality. We'll talk about it already next time. The importance of the questions you ask of yourselves first and foremost, of your partner, of your students, of your parents, of your employees in the future, teammates and so on. Questions make a difference.

Peter Drucker, —The most common source of mistakes in management decisions Peter Drucker, considered the most important management scholar of 20th century, just recently passed away, saying the biggest mistake is not asking the right questions.

As we'll see next time, this is the biggest mistake in research potentially. This is the biggest mistake in application. Not asking the right questions as well, whether it's in managing organizations, whether it's managing our lives. Now. When I said that questions are important and answers matter less, I am not coming from a point of relativism. I'm not a relativist. I think they are ... To some questions definitive answers that are important to know. However, what I'm saying is that it's important, not less important to focus on questions when it comes to education.

The educator, Neil Postman once said, "The kids enter schools as question marks and they leave as periods." My hope in this class is to bring up many more question marks than periods. Once again, it's about chipping away the excess stone because as kids, we are always asking questions. We are always curious. Let me show you a quick excerpt from a video of one of my favorite psychologists, actually the comedian, Seinfeld. We will watch a lot of excerpts throughout the semester. Talking about what we were like as kids. See is this in your way "So, the first couple of years I made my own costumes which of course sucked: the ghost, the hobo... Then, finally, the third year, begging the parents, I got the Superman Halloween costume. Not surprisingly. Cardboard box, self-made top, mask included. Remember the rubber band on the back of that mask? That was a quality item there, wasn't it?

That was good for about 10 seconds before it snapped out of that cheap little

staple they put it in there with. You go to your first house: "Trick or..." Snap!" It broke. I don't believe it!" "Wait up you guys! I gotta fix it! Hey wait up! Wait up!" Kids don't say "wait". They say "wait up! Hey wait up!" Coz when you are little your life is up. Your future is up. Everything you want is up. "Wait up! Hold up! Shut up! Momma, clean up! Let me stay up!" Parents of course are just the opposite. Everything is down. "Just calm down! Slow down! Calm down here! Sit down. Put that down!" So again this curiosity, this looking up, this opening up is opposed to closing down that kids have. This notion. This is what I hope will happen in this class. The one real objective of education is to leave a man in the condition of continually asking questions.

So here is a longitudinal study that was done by John Carter. John Carter, professor of leadership management of the business school across the river, came to Harvard in 1972, joined the faculty and started to follow Harvard class, MBA class of 1973 and followed them through 20 years. And what he was interested in was to find all the information he could about this class. What he found 20 years later, early 90s when this study ended was these students were extremely successful, Or ex-students were extremely successful, students were extremely successful, very wealthy, having a lot of impact, whether it's on the organizations, on the community. They did extremely well. But within the large group of highly successful Harvard MBAs, he found a small group that was extraordinarily successful, more successful than the rest of group, whether in terms of income, whether in terms of impact, whether in terms of overall quality of life. Extraordinarily successful. What he wanted to identify was why-- what distinguishes this small group from the rest of the pack: very successful, but not quite as successful as that small group. And he found only two things. It was not their IQs that made no difference whatsoever to their long-term success.

It was not where they came from, pre-MBA, what they did had nothing to do with it. Two and two things along mattered in terms of determining who will be the

extraordinarily successful and the rest: the first thing was the extraordinarily

successful groups really believe in themselves. They thought they could do well. They were driven. They were motivated. And we'll talk about it in future lecture as belief in self-fulfilling prophecies. They thought "I'm going to make it. I'm going to succeed." That's the first thing. The sense of the confidence. The second thing that he found was this group, they were always asking questions, --always asking questions, initially of their boss, later of their employees, of their partners, children, parents, friends. They were always asking question. They were always at the state of curiosity. Always looking up, opening up, wanting to understand the world the more. They didn't say "Now I have my MBA. That's it. I know enough. " They were life-long learners. They were always asking questions. These two distinguishing characteristics account for the difference between the extraordinarily successful and those who were successful.

The question that has guided me whether it's in writing the book, whether it's in creating this class, whether it's first and foremost my personal life is what I call "the question of the question", which is "how can we help ourselves and others, individuals, communities and society become happier?" Note that it is not about helping ourselves and others become happy. It is about becoming happier. Why? Because many people ask me, "So Tal, are you happy?" And I can't really answer that question. I don't know what it means. How do I determine whether or not I am happy? Is it compared to someone else? Is there a certain point beyond which I become happy? Happiness is not a binary either-or, zero-one-- either I'm happy or I'm unhappy. Happiness resides on a continuum. So my answer to this question-- "am I happy?" is today I'm happier than I was 15 years ago when I started focusing on this pursuit.

15 years from now I certainly hope to be happier than I am today. Happiness is lifelong pursuit. Hopefully this class is part of that pursuit, but just part. You'll not be happy at the end of class. Hopefully you'll be happier. Cos many people sit here

during the lectures on self-esteem, for example, or when we talk explicitly about happiness, they say, "Wait. Do I have self-esteem?"-- Thinking to themselves. "Do I have high self-esteem or low self-esteem?" Irrelevant. Impossible to answer also. The question is "how can I improve my self-esteem, my healthy self-esteem, not narcissism of course? How can I become happier?" That's an important question. And this is the question of questions. This class is not a survey of positive psychology.

If you want a survey on positive psychology, I can recommend some excellent textbooks whether it's by Lopez (Shane J. Lopez) or by Peterson (Chris Peterson). Great textbooks. There is also The Handbook of Positive Psychology which is a huge book with most what you want to know about this field. You can also use it in self-defense. Very useful in that respect. But a wonderful book, very well-written, very accessible in the spirit of positive psychology. But this is not that. This is not a survey of positive psychology. What it is is a selective exploration of the question of the questions. In that way, it is eclectic. My background is in psychology and philosophy. I studied organizational behavior. I worked as a consultant in business for a few years. Still do some work

there. I worked in the field of education, doing a lot of work in field of education. And I take from all these areas.

I also draw on not just from positive psychology. I draw on clinical psychology in this class. I draw on cognitive psychology, social psychology and so on. It's an eclectic class. Because my question, my guiding question was "what would contribute to happiness?" And if something within psychopathology I thought could contribute to our wellbeing, I took that and used that. And if something from the field of consulting in organizational behavior could contribute, that became part of the class, as much as I could fit in of course in one semester. So the class is eclectic. The class is not cross-cultural. I will bring in ideas from eastern thoughts. I lived in Asia for a few years. I worked there. Studied and continue to study the eastern philosophies and

psychologies. But my train primarily is in western psychology. And the focus of the class will be that. However that doesn't mean that positive psychology doesn't apply to people from different places in the world. There was recently a meeting between senior scientists, psychologists from the west, people like Paul Ekman, Richard Davidson- some of the most important minds in the field of psychology meeting with the Dalai Lama and some of his monks.

They were talking about the future of psychology, about the research, and how can you research meditation and so on. And one of the things they were talking a lot about is the cultural differences. And when that came up, the Dalai Lama suddenly seemed uneasy. And when Daniel Goleman who was writing about this whole event and it was held in India asked him what's wrong, Dalai Lama said that he was not comfortable with talking and emphasizing so much cultural differences. You can say many things about Dalai Lama. One thing you cannot say about him is that he's culturally insensitive, arguably one of the most sensitive people alive. And yet he said we are focusing too much on cultural differences and he added not because there are no cultural differences. Of course there are and they are important. But there are many more similarities than differences. And we shouldn't ignore those similarities.

Daniel Goleman about the Dalai Lama, "We were a little bit surprised by the Dalai Lama's seeming resistance to the notion of cultural differences. So I am willing to introduce these ideas but A, because it's not my training and people who are focusing on cultural differences will do a much better job than I do; and second, because what I hope to look into is the universal, things are common across cultures. So we'll study research in this area. But even more than that, we'll become even more particular than just talking about psychology in this part of the world. We'll study yourselves. We are going to go that particular. Now why? When I put this class together, I didn't think to myself, "Ok, so what are the things that I need to introduce

in order to please the participants in the class, the students?"

That's not what I thought. What I thought about was "what was the class that I would have wanted to take as an undergraduate here? What would help me become happier if I were sitting there?" In other words, thinking from my perspective from very personal perspective. In this class I am going to encourage you. about large sample sizes. But I'm going to encourage you more than anything to look inside yourselves. To study yourselves. Whether it's through response papers that will be due weekly starting in 2 weeks; whether it's in your final project that will be a presentation that you won't have to give but you'll have to write out-- a presentation about your favorite topic or the topic that matters most to you; whether it's in sections that you'll be talking about how can I apply these ideas to my life.

The time-ins are about thinking about how can I take in the ideas and use them. It's about studying ourselves. Because as Carl Rogers says, "What is most personal is most general." "What is most personal is most general." And as Maslow adds, "We must remember that knowledge of one's own deep nature is also simultaneously knowledge of human nature in general." When we understand ourselves better, when we identify ourselves, we are better able to identify with others. In fact, this is in many ways the source of empathy, of the healthy empathy. And there are some studies showing that people who know themselves, who study themselves, who are self-reflective, display less egregious behavior, less immoral behavior toward others. Behavior that would fall under say, racism. And it's counter-intuitive to some extent. "Wait. Don't you first need to study the other so that you can be more sensitive to others?" Yes, that too. But it's not enough. It is important to also study ourselves, because when we see our deep nature, what we encounter there is part of the universal nature, the similarities among us all, regardless of where we are from.

And this was what Dalai Lama was talking about: not stop cross-cultural. Do it.

Important. But at the same time, not ignore the self. Not ignore the universal within each one of us. C.S. Lewis, "There is one thing and only one in the whole universe which we know about that we could learn from external observation. That one thing is ourselves. We have, so to speak, inside information; we are in the know." Now there are of course biases when we study ourselves which is why it's not enough to just study the self. It's important to counter it, to add to it, academic work, studying others. That's why we'll do some research or study research as well as do some search--searching inside us. Both are important. We shouldn't, just because there are biases and mistakes that potentially can be made, it doesn't mean we need to throw out the baby with the bath water and stop studying ourselves. So we'll do that or rather you'll do that probably more than any other class on campus.

Finally this may be news to you, but this is not English 10A or Math 55, meaning you'll not have to read as much as you will read for 10A or for a history class, and this class is not as difficult as Math 55 so you rest. I'm sure there are some people here who took the class. This class at the same

time is about rigorous fun. Fun...because it's fun to study ourselves. Sometimes it hurts and sometimes we see things that we may not like, but overall it's fun. It's interesting. And at the same time it's rigorous, based on research. Now many of the ideas that you'll encounter in this class are very simple, very accessible. Common sense. However they are simple, not simplistic. And here is the difference. Oliver Wendell Holmes NOliver Wendell Holmes-- this court is attributed to him, not 100% sure it's his-- said, "I would not give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity."

What Holmes means here is that he doesn't care about just simplicity, easy, off-the-cuff, whimsical ideas. What he does care about though is the simplicity that comes after. We have chewed the idea, after we have digested it, after we have

thought about it. Ideas that have been worked on. And if on the other side of complexity we can read simplicity and common sense, that's great. That's what he's interested in. That is also positive psychology researchers that we'll discuss throughout the semester are interested in. The simplicity on the other side of complexity. And there is a very big difference between these two simplicities, even though on the face of it, they may at times look similar. What this class requires is a very different kind of effort. A very different kind of effort to other class. Again it doesn't require the effort that you'll need in 55 or in English 10A. The kind of effort that it does require is the effort of application, of applying into your life, of introducing behavioral actual change to your life. And before we go into some of the technicalities of the class such as the syllabus, I want to end with a story about Peter Drucker. Peter Drucker, who I quoted earlier, father of study of management in modern times. Peter Drucker lived to the grand old age of 94, passed away just a couple of years ago. Toward the end of his life while he was still 100% lucid, it was more difficult for him to be mobile and to go into organizations. So what he did was invite people who wanted consulting from him, wanted to learn from him to come to his home. And he had Presidents, Premier Ministers of countries.

He had CEOs of Fortune 500 companies coming spend the weekend with him. And on Friday, this was how we started with every session, with every world leader, whether in business, whether in non-for-profit, whether in politics. He would say to them the following, "on Monday I don't want you to call me up and tell me how wonderful it was, "-- meaning how wonderful the weekend was, "on Monday I want you to call me up and tell me what you are doing differently." At the end of the semester or at the end of the lecture, if you enjoyed it, by all means tell me that you enjoyed it, that you had fun. But more important, it is what you are doing differently, how this has an impact on your life and that takes effort. We are going to spend a whole week talking just about change, nothing directly related to positive psychology.

Just about change. Because it is so difficult to change. Because we know most organizational change fails, because we know more individual change fails. Unless we introduce behavioral change along with our cognitive and emotional change. Affect and cognition is not enough; behavior has to be there as well. What you are doing differently. To do things differently

very often takes courage.

Some of your response papers that you'll hand in-- none of them are graded; they are all just graded "pass/failed"-- you'll have to hand them in and then you'll pass. But some of them may be the most difficult papers that you've written here. For some they'll be the easiest. And things will just flow out. That's about introducing change. That's about reflecting. That's about taking time-in. That's about chipping away the excess stone. And it can only be done through this kind of effort. So if you really want class to make a difference in your life, it's up to you. I'm going to introduce to you the material. I'm going to introduce to you this wonderful new field of positive psychology. What is up to you is to then take it and apply it. I want to talk a little about the syllabus and the requirements. And I'll give you a little time for questions. But before I do that, I would also like to welcome-- I know that some of you are watching this from home, to the extension school students, it's wonderful to have you here. Do come and visit once a while. And you'll be working with obviously part of this class, but also with Deb Levy who is the, they had teaching fellow for the extension school.

They had teaching fellow for the FAS class is Sean Achor and I'd like just to invite him for just a few words, just to introduce himself to you. And you'll be introduced to other TFs we have. We have an amazing team this year. This is Sean. Sean: Hey good morning. Can you guys hear me? Can you hear me now? Great. This is absolutely honored to be back teaching positive psychology again. Tal is too humble. This is not only extraordinary that he is sharing his time with us, but he's actually moved here back, moved his family back from Israel for the entire semester,--

his wife and his two little children just so he can teach this class with us. And this is absolutely an extraordinary opportunity for us to share this moment with them. And I'm really excited about it. Last time we taught this class, we did a survey to find out what type of people were sitting in this room-- they are just like yourselves-- and find out why you'll be taking this class. Coz the comment that we get so often about this class is why would Harvard students possibly be unhappy? What do they have to be unhappy about? They thought everyone who'd be taking this class would be taking it because they are already really happy and they want to study about how amazing they are. And they'd like to learn things that they can tell the roommates so clearly that (?) themselves. But it turns out actually over a third of people who took this class last year took the class because they felt depressed. And they were trying to learn about the research about positive psychology. And another third because they wanted to learn about optimism. Another third did it for completely different reasons.

I think. Additional third this year did it because Tal was on the Jon Stewart Daily Show. I am absolutely thrilled about this class. The syllabus which Tal is about to tell you about is.. Actually we learned a couple of other things about you guys. Did you know that of people who take positive psychology, 75% of you are officers of club,

35% of you are the highest ranking officers of club, which means that you think there are about 2000 clubs at Harvard, you are in club of three, and you happen to be the president. We learned other reasons why you are not happy. we learned that the average number of romantic relationships for people to take positive psychology in 4 years is between zero and one. Zero and one. (Tal: No! I don't believe it.) Don't leave.

- But that was before taking positive psychology class.\N- That was before taking the class. We are going to test you afterwards. The average number of sexual partners is between zero and .5. I have no idea what .5 sexual partners is. This class is going to be amazing. It was amazing in the past and Tal we actually have extraordinary teaching staff here with us. It's a large teaching staff.

And Tal has actually already given us home works so the teachers are going to be learning not only the material you are doing and talk you about which the experts (?), but learning how to be better teachers. He's given us books to read. He's actually given us assignment. It's a big extraordinary class in that sense. In terms of the syllabus, it's going to be online. Tal just described now we've decided to go green, so no trees are in making of this class except the large auditorium made of wood. Sections-- we are going to try sections online next weekend. So we are going to get the numbers on Wednesday. On following weekend we will be doing sectioning that gives you a very short of turnaround time. But that way you can give me Monday to change your section if you need to, which I hope you won't. And sections will start the following week. Thank you very much. If you have any questions, send me an email.

Ok, so... I think I don't need to explain to you why there is one lecture in the semester that I don't teach and Sean will teach it. And that is the lecture on humor. Figure out why yourselves. I do think you'll have to walk and talk if you are teaching something. The syllabus. The class, is to introduce you to my thinking about the class, is what I call it, integrated class. What that means is that integrated vertically as well as horizontally. Vertically means that every class connected to the next class is connected to every class throughout the semester around a spiral. So what we'll talk about next week, we'll revisit it again in lesson 7, lesson 17 and lesson 24. Everything is interconnected on the higher level on a spiral-- in other words will lead to deep understanding and hopefully assimilation of the material. So it's vertically interconnected. It's also horizontally interconnected. That means every part of the class reinforces and influences the other part.

The lectures, not enough, you'll get a lot more in sections. Sections are mandatory. You'll do a lot of work in your sections, very much related to your response papers that many student claim the most important part of the class. Because

that's where you get the time-in. That's when you really get to chip away. Very much connected to the final project. The final project is a presentation that you'll write out. You don't actually give it but give it to a couple of friends just to get feedback. Not graded on that part. The final project is graded as a final paper, but just what you hand in, what you submit. And the reason why there is a final paper because the best way which is like a presentation, because the best way to learn is to

teach. And you'll be teaching these materials to other people -- any material that you are interested in your presentation. So the readings, very much connected and take you to the next level of understanding and assimilation. So any questions before I finish up? Any question from you? Alright. So let me just say-- one second finishing words. I am very excited to be back here. My families are very excited to be back here. Looking forward to a meaningful, pleasurable, enjoyable and happier semester with you. Thank you.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 2

Hi. Good morning. I'm so glad that you came. I was worried that no one would show up in this weather. I'm glad you are Ok. Just a couple of announcements. Questions that I received via email. A few things before we jump into the material. First of all, I was asked, || who is this class for? Is it for people-- you know it's positive psychology -- people that are very unhappy? Is it only for people who are depressed? Who is this class for?" Well, the class is for anyone who is interested in Positive

psychology and anyone who wants to be happier. If you are extremely happy, you can still be happier. If you are very unhappy, you can still be happier. So the class essentially is for anyone who's interested in the material.

And I would add someone who is really interested to work, to put the kind of effort that we talked about last time. Just not the kind of effort that we would require you to wreck your head about understanding certain concept, but it is effort in terms of applying these ideas to your lives. Now you may want to take this class, because you are interested on academic level in positive psychology that's perfectly fine. And you'll get many-- we'll talk about numerous studies in every lecture, starting next time. We'll talk about study after study after study, so you'll get that element as well. However, if you are thinking about taking positive psychology for personal benefits, you need to put the effort in. And I'll talk more about that today. So the class is for everyone. Anyone who's extremely happy and wants to be happier and anyone who's not happy and wants to be happier.

Pass/fail-- perfectly fine. Again the idea about this class is first and foremost for you. So I would urge you if you do take pass and fail to put in the work, and that's why the one element of pass/fail is not negotiable is that all the response papers have to be submitted. Now the response papers, as you know, are not graded. They are basically reflection papers. Will you reflect about the ideas about things that can be

applied to your life? But they are required. So you hand them in, you pass. If you don't hand them in, you fail. But other than that, by all means, if you want to take this class pass/fail, it's perfectly fine. Third thing, you'll be exposed to many theories, to

many ideas in this class. Not everything would resonate of you. There's a wonderful book just came out in 2008, just two weeks ago, called "The How of Happiness" by Sonja Lyubomirsky. And there she talks about the concept-- she's a professor at Riverside (UC), Harvard college graduate and went to Stanford for graduate school she talks about the importance of finding fit, meaning the fit between certain technique, or tool, or idea, and yourself. Not every idea, not every study that you've heard about, not every intervention that you actually practice and you will practice interventions in your life, whether it's doing acts of kindness, whether it's expressing gratitude, whether it's physical exercising, whether it's journaling. You will do all these things throughout the semester. Not everything would be right for you. You'll be exposed to it. You'll try it. And then you'll make up your mind, "yes, this is what I want to incorporate" or "no, this is just not relevant for me." So it's important to keep that in mind. Anything that I talk about is backed by research, but the research doesn't say its right for everyone. It says it's for most people or for many people; this has worked or it is working.

So again be an active participant in this class as opposed to passive recipient of a doctrine. And identify the things that work for you-- not everything. I guarantee not everything will work for you, but a lot of things will. Your response papers that I just mentioned earlier: they are due at 5 pm, sorry, you'll get them by 5 pm on Tuesday, starting next Tuesday. And they will be due at 5 pm on Sunday to your TF. Again the response papers are usually for most people fun, interesting and engaging activities. Not graded, just basically for you to reflect, for you to grow through them. Thesis writers. How many of you are thesis writers? Just so I get a show of hand here.

know it's crunch time around that time- being through it myself here. So you'll not have to take the midterm. Your final will account for more. Unless you want to take the midterm, of course you'll more than welcome to. we won't throw you out of the classroom. Your thesis writers may. There'll be many announcements online. Do check the website on the regular basis. We communicate a lot of things. Instead of sending you emails, we'll have the announcements. Check them regularly, about 6 7 times a day. Just kidding. Once a day or once every two days is more than enough.

I'd like Before I do jump into the material and we have a very exciting lecture today, to invite Deb Levy who is the head TF for extension school-- so extension school students, I know there are a couple of you here, those of you at home-- here she is. Deb Levy. Deb Levy: Alright. I have about 20, 30 minutes to talk so I'm gonna start with my childhood. I am just kidding. I am the head TF for the extension school and we are thrilled. We have 296 extension students taking this course online, which means they are going to watch videos, and then extension students you'll be in sections on teleconference, When people are gonna call in, there are gonna be teleconferences which is going to be a great opportunity. Let's say hi to people out there in New Zealand. Hi. France. Kentucky. Lexington. It's really unbelievable. So the other thing is I want to take a picture actually. (Tal: No pictures in the classroom.) You'll take a picture Tal. So I am not going to do any lecturing. But since Tal and I have very similar systematic stuff, so if Tal is absent

for any reason, I'll be doing the lecture for you. (Tal: Good.) The other is: people who are extension, I want to you be patient. We are going to get information out there as soon as we can. And you'll all be sectioned in next week or so. And feel thrilled to be here. Great. Thank you Deb.

So I want to start with a story, something that happened to me exactly 2 years ago, just about to the day, when was the last time when I taught positive psychology.

dedicating this class as well as all my future positive psychology class is to, Philip Stone passed away just the day before the class started. Very stressful period. And I got sick. And I got very sick. Somehow I got through the class. I taught the Thursday class. That started 2 years ago. It started on Tuesday. So I taught on Tuesday. Somehow Thursday, completely drugged. This lecture I made it through somehow. And I went to home and I couldn't fall asleep. I was in real pain. I went to the doctors. That was on Friday afternoon, just saying "you know I have to go. The medication I took didn't help." Went to the doctors. Had some blood tests. And finally after days I couldn't sleep because of pain, fell asleep. This was Friday night. In the midnight, there was a phone call. I don't hear it. I am fast asleep. My wife picks it up. Tommy picks it up. It's the doctor. And the doctor says to Tommy, "the test results just came in. And Tal should get to the hospital now." She said to the doctor, "He just fell asleep. He hasn't slept for days. Can it wait till tomorrow morning?"

And the doctor said, || No. And he has to go to Beth Israel, because they have the best labs for what he needs right now." And she doesn't elaborate it any more. Tommy wakes me up, retells me the story of what's happening. Somehow I get up. She can't take me to the hospital because David, at that time one year old, is asleep. We don't want to wake him up. So we get a cab to take me to Beth Israel. On the way-- so this was the year after I was no longer resident tutors in Leverett. We were (?), driving down the Charles River. Up and drive and then next to Harvard. I look at Harvard. I look at the beautiful river. It's very quiet. Not many cars just after midnight after a Friday night. And I can't help myself but think, "what if there's something really terrible going on?" I mean, why would they call me midnight to the hospital-- Beth Israel, insisting on just one specific hospital? There must be something really wrong. And my mind begins to wander. And I say, "what if I only have a year left? What would I do in that year?" I become very sad because I think I won't see David grow up. I won't see-- I won't have any future children. Be careful up there. And I become very

wistful and sad.

And then I ask myself, "Ok so professionally, what would I want to do in that last year?" So I know personally exactly what I'll do. I'll spend all the time that I can with my family. But professionally what do I want to accomplish in this year? And my immediate response was I want to leave behind a coherent body of work, a coherent course introducing people to positive psychology. While I arrived at the hospital, I had some more checks. It ends up being nothing too

serious. They put me on antibiotics. And within a couple of days I am on the way to recovery. I want to share with you today though why. Why is it the most important thing for me at that time and still today, is to leave behind a coherent body of work about positive psychology, to introduce you to this wonderful field? Why positive psychology? Why is it? Its own field? Why is it not--well, just study happiness, wellbeing as part of social psychology or clinical psychology? Why have so many scholars around the world united around this concept of positive psychology? So this is what I want to do today.

In the year of 2000, a research was done by David Myers. Davis Myers, from Hope College-- some of you who've studied social psychology may have read his textbook, did research, looking at psychological abstracts. What he looked at was the ratio between "negative research" and "positive research". Here is what he found. From 1967 to year of 2000- this was around the time when positive psychology started, what he found in the 33 years are over 5000 articles on anger, 5000 research articles on anger. He found over 41000 research articles on anxiety and over 50000 articles on depression. And then he looked at the positive words, positive research. He looked for research on joy. And he found staggering 415 studies. It does get better. He looked at research on happiness and he found close to 2000 articles on happiness in 33 years. Life satisfaction came on top: over 2500 studies. Still, if you look at that, the negative studies versus the positive studies, the ratio that you get is 21 to 1. For every

one article on some positive aspect, some positive element of life, wellbeing, satisfaction, joy, happiness, you get 21 articles on depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, neurosis and so on. Ratio of 21 to 1. Very depressing ratio, I must admit. In fact, it made me very angry and anxious. Studies focus on, primarily on what doesn't work, mostly on what doesn't work. And this is not a new phenomenon.

Here is something from Abraham Maslow, who we mentioned last time, talking about this phenomenon in 1954: "The science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side. It has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illnesses, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations or his psychological height. It is as if psychology had voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction and that darker, meaner half." So what does psychology study? I mean the psychology concentrators here know that, probably guess that. We study a lot of prejudice. We study a lot of depression and anxiety. We study a lot about conformity. We study a lot about misjudgments and errors, very much focusing on this aspect and very little-- again, 21 to 1, very little-- on the positive. And when I look at this ratio and I think about it, this is 1954-- hasn't changed much since. And when I think about it and I look into it, I think that psychology needs help. I really do. I mean think about it at a personal level. That if you had a person who 21 hours a day was depressed and one hour in a day felt good? Or one day feeling good and then 21 days feeling anxious and depressed? You would say that this person would need help. And the field I think needs help. But the question becomes "is it the right analogy?" Should we look at it this way? Because the

21 ratio is unhealthy, certainly would be so on the individual level, but it reflects reality in many ways. Because what we are seeing today in more and more research showing that there is more and more depression around the world, that there is more and more anxiety, east, west, north, south-- around the world. And one could argue-- people who argue for continuing to do research in this area, for doing less in positive

psychologies, -- well we should be doing even more than the 21 to 1 ratio, because we want to alleviate the anxiety and depression that people experience.

Today depression is 10 times higher than it was in 1960. Now part of it is because there's more awareness, because we measure better. But that's not all. It's also simply because objectively there's more depression. And one way of knowing that is that the most objective "measure" that we have is unfortunately suicide. And numbers have risen significantly around the world, not just in the United States-- whether it's in China, whether it's Australia-- as well as here. The mean age for depression today is less than 15. Kids at very young age are introduced to the "information highway". And very often, they are not prepared, not able to deal with it in an effective way. So when we look at this data, we say we do need more research to help people overcome depression, to help people overcome anxiety. And I don't want to belittle that. That is important. It is extremely important. What I'm arguing, what I will argue for, is the shift of the pendulum. So it's no longer 21 to 1. There are more, many more studies in positive psychology, -- not to the exclusion of, not at all, but just shifting the pendulum. How about here? In our local village?

This article, -- I couldn't find a study that is more recent, this was published in

2004. Harvard Crimson (<http://www.thecrimson.com/>). This article says that, in their

6 months study of this, 80% of Harvard students experienced depression over the past year. Now we are not talking about the regular ups and downs that most people have ten times a day-- I certainly do. We are talking about depression here. For an extended period of time. 47% of Harvard students, according to this, -- and grant it: this is not academic study, but I will share with you academic study in a minute, published in a top-tier refereed journal. But Crimson has founded in its survey that 47% Harvard students over the past year have experienced depression to the point of not functioning. So they couldn't leave home. They were really struggling to just basically

get through the day. 47%. Now when people look at this, they say "well of course, we need to focus more on psychopathology. 21 to 1-- not enough! 30 to 1 sounds more like it."

We see it around campuses. This is not peculiar to Harvard. Not at all peculiar to Harvard. Richard Kadison, who is the head of mental health services here, in the New England Journal of

Medicine-- probably the leading journal in the field of Medicine, recently published an article, where he talked about a survey that was done among 13500 college students nationwide, different kinds of colleges, universities, states schools, private schools. And what they found in this very significant study was that 45% of college students nationwide over the past year have experienced depression to the point of not functioning.

So The Harvard Crimson found 47; nationwide, it was 45-- essentially identical, no significant difference among the two. This is a nationwide phenomenon. In this study, 94% of college students nationwide feel overwhelmed and stressed by everything that they have to do. 94% I mean these are supposed to be the best four years of our lives. Something is going on here. Now this is not unique to United States. I just recently came back from a tour. I was in-- spent time in Europe-- in the UK, France; spent a lot of time in China and some time in Australia. In every one of these places, the governments are really concerned; university presidents are very concerned about the growing level of depression, anxiety and general mental disorder, rise of suicide rates in all of these countries that I mentioned. So we have a global epidemic here. And once again going back so: Is it the 21:1 ratio good? Is it important? Shouldn't it be increased? How can we even think about studying happiness and well-being and love and joy? Shouldn't we first deal with the real pressing problem of depression, anxiety, neurosis and so on?

Some truth to that, but again what I'm going to argue for in this class is that we

do need to also, not only, not exclusively, not even necessarily primarily; we need to also focus on the positive. I am going to talk about three reasons why we should do that. The first reason is that it is important to focus on what works, because what works or what we focus on rather creates reality. If we focus on what is working, we'll have more working in our world, more working in ourselves, more working in our relationships. The second reason why positive psychology as an independent field of study as a course in and of itself is important is that being happy is not just the negation of happiness. It doesn't mean just get rid of depression or anxiety that I am experiencing, I spontaneously become happy. That's not the case. That's not how it works. And finally, prevention which is very important today, the most effective way of preventing hardship, -- whether it's depression, whether it's anxiety, -- is actually by focusing on and cultivating the positive. Now I will share with you some studies about this. So for these three reasons, we need positive psychology.

Let me begin with the importance of focusing on what works. In the introduction to the Handbook of Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman who we talked about last time, considered the father of positive psychology, network of scholars, says this: "The aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life." Note that he says also. He doesn't say exclusively or even primarily. It's important to focus on what works, -- whether it is in our relationship, whether it's in

ourselves, whether it's in others, whether it's in Harvard, whether it's in United States or the world-- in order to have more what works. Now the question is "how do we focus on what works?" And the answer to this question is through the questions that we ask. Let me illustrate through a case study. Psychologists, starting in the late 1940s, studied at-risk population. More and more money-- government money, university money, philanthropist money-- went into study in the cities or places where

more prone to later-on crime, teen pregnancy and so on. So this study they put in a lot of money, a lot of effort into this. The question that the psychologists asked was "why do these individuals fail? why does such a high percentage of students in that at-risk population end up dropping out of school? Getting pregnant? Crime?" --And we'll talk about the statistics later on next week. "Why do so many of these individuals fail?" Now an important question, good intentions of the psychologists, smart people, lot of money, lot of resources going in. However, very little change was introduced. Very little change came about as results of these studies. And the situation in many areas continued to exacerbate. Certain didn't get any better, despite the good intentions, despite the resources, despite the brain power that twined into the researching into this question. Interesting answers-- well, we need better education, we need better buildings, we need more resources, but very little change actually in practice came about.

And then there was a paradigm, quite literally a paradigm shift in the 1980s. Through the work of Antonovsky who I mentioned last time and I'll mention again today, through the work of Antonovsky, and other people like Ellen Langer, other people like Alice Isen, different questions started to be asked by psychologists. Instead of asking what did these individuals fail, positive psychologists started to ask what made some individuals succeed despite unfavorable circumstances? Maybe it was the case that many failed, but not everyone. Some succeeded and succeeded big time. And what psychologists started to do then was to ask why. What is it about them that is so successful? And that, in the words of Frost, made all the difference. The psychologists started to identify elements, aspects of these individuals and studied them in depth, starting to study the successful individuals, and identify elements that they could then teach later in creating interventions based on what they had studied.

And suddenly, there were results, real results, tangible results, after decades of

virtually zero results, simply based on the question. And the main concept that came out at that time, through the research of these psychologists who started to ask the positive question, started to focus on what is working on the successful children. The concept that came out was the concept of resilience. Now today everyone talks about resilience. We talk about resilience in school, at work, in the job, in the bedroom. Everywhere resilience. However, at that time in the 1980s, very few people even talked about or knew what that means. When they studied resilience, which is defined as following, it made all the difference. Resilience-- a class of phenomena characterized by patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity or risk. These kids, who succeeded-- ended up succeeding, and they look through longitudinal studies-- 5 years later, 10

years, 30 years later, the kids who succeeded, were resilient. Initially, when they studied these kids, the assumption was these must be super kids, extraordinary kids, one in a hundred, one in a thousand- not really replicable, therefore. However, what they found when they continued to study those people who work, those people who succeeded, despite the unfavorable circumstances, -- what they found was these were not super kids. In fact these were ordinary kids with ordinary characteristics that led to extraordinary results. For example, let me share with you some of the things. These kids were optimistic, -- not optimistic in the detached Pollyannaish sense, -- optimistic in that they believe in things that would work out well, and we'll talk a lot about optimism as an interpretation style, in the work of Martin Seligman and Karen Reivich.

They were optimistic in the sense of thinking, "well, it may not work well this time. It will work out later. I have learned from what had just happened." They had faith and sense of meaning in life. Sometimes it was religious faith, not always. It was doing something that they really believed in. Many of them were idealistic. One of main topics we will discuss in this class is that to be idealistic is to be realistic, because we have a real internal need, innate need for idealism. So these kids

experienced sense of meaning, whether it was meaning in terms of personal success and how I will make it, or sense of meaning in their community contributing, something meaningful in sense of purpose. By the way, when I go through all these, these are no less important for any other person in the world. This resilience as we mentioned earlier is just not important for the at-risk population. It's as important at Harvard. And not just during exam period. It's important that resilience is associated with wellbeing. So think about these characteristics and you display them. And the interesting thing about all these characteristics they can all be learned. that I'll mention here is that they can all be taught; In many ways, this class is about that. And when the psychologists identified these, they started to teach them and the individuals started to learn and that made all the difference. In addition to the faith and sense of meaning, pro-social behavior, helping other people, shifting from helplessness to helpfulness, they were significant. One of the things that we'll talk about is how meaningful it is to help other people. And how much it doesn't just only help others, it also helps us. And we enter an upward spiral between self-help and other-help. Because when we help others, we are helping ourselves.

When we help ourselves, we help others. And so on and so on. So they were pro-social. They were helping other people. They focused on their strength rather than primarily deficiencies. They did not ignore their weaknesses, but they asked, "what am I good at? What am I really, really good at?" And again, part of this course, you'll identify your strength, whether it's through online test, whether it's through reflection papers, whether it's in section. You'll think about it whether it's through your readings. Identify the strength. What are they good at? They set goals for themselves. They were future-oriented, not just thinking about how bad things are today perhaps, but also thinking about "this is where I wanna be 5 years or 10 years from now." We are going to devote three classes to goal setting, very significant part of resilience. They had a role model. Someone

who they said about "I want to be like her; I want to be

like him." It could be a teacher. It could be a parent, sibling, and friend. Sometimes, it was a historical figure or a fictional character, someone that they want to emulate, to be like. That gave them strength. That gave them sense of direction. And finally, most significantly, they did not bowl alone. They had social support. They did not say : "well I am tough enough to do it by myself." Rather they said:"I'm tough enough to reach out for help." Because that does require certain toughness. The strength to admit weaknesses as well, the strength to admit a need. Now think about these: do you have these things here for yourself at Harvard in life? And if not, you can cultivate all of these things, whether it's a social support-- and it doesn't have to be a hundred people whom you talk to everyday; it can be one or two close friends, mom, dad, roommates-- makes a big difference. No. 1 contributor to resilience. Now the important thing about social support is identifying the right people. People who, when you reach out to them, will reach back to you and will be able to give back. I want to show you an example now of a not so good role model for social support. And that is an interaction between Grace and Karen from Will and Grace. Will and Grace (From Episode 309)

SALESMAN: This video game makes a nice birthday gift. Do you think your stepson would like that?

KAREN: I don't know, honey. Can he eat it or rub up against it? SALESMAN: Let's come at this a different way. What are his interests? KAREN: Ham.

SALESMAN: Why don't I just let you browse awhile?

KAREN: Yeah. Thanks. Ooh, and, uh, do you think there's anything you could do about all these kids in here?

SALESMAN: Ma'am, it's a toy store.

KAREN: Yeah. See what you can do. Move it, Shorty.

GRACE: Hi, Karen. Um... I can't help you shop today. I've got to go. KAREN: What's going on? What's happening? What's with the geisha hand? GRACE: Nothing. I just had something zapped at the dermatologist's, and it looks kinda funky, and I just don't want anyone to see it right now.

KAREN: Grace, I'm sure it's not nearly as bad as you think it is. It's probably nothing, a little dot. Come on. Show mama.

KAREN: Aah! Whoa! Oh! Oh, my God! Oh! GRACE: Shh! Shhhhh! Karen, Will you calm down?
KAREN: How do you expect me to calm down when I can see its heart beating right in front of me?! Aah!

GRACE: Shh! KAREN: Well, uh, alright. Alright, I'm sorry. So how long have you had the herpes?
GRACE: It's not herpes. It's not even herpes adjacent.

KAREN: Oh, yeah? Well, it's close enough to be invited to the herpes family picnic.

GRACE: It was a weird freckle, and the doctor wanted to freeze it, and then he told me that it was going to take 10 days to heal. I mean, what made him assume that I could look awful for 10 days? Respond to that, and I will rub it all over your Prada.

KAREN: What are you lookin' at, prego? Haven't you ever seen herpes before?

Jeez. Fat people are so insensitive.

GRACE: Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Would you look at it in this little toy mirror? It's gotten...bigger. It's like Barbie's dream zit. Thank God I canceled my date with Mark.

KAREN: Yeah, 'cause that thing looks like it needs orange cones and police tape around it.

GRACE: Come on. Let's get outta here.

So Karen may not be a good choice for social support. But there are many people who are. Now think about the power of the question. Think about what a question did. For decades, many kids who potentially could have been helped weren't helped, because the right question was not asked as well. And it was only after positive question, the focusing on the positive question was asked that suddenly psychologists were able to see what was right in front of them for decades. It was right there, apparent evident, waiting to be discovered, but they completely missed it. Smart,

well-intentioned, well-funded, but also didn't ask the right question. Questions create reality. They create possibilities. A question begins a quest. What they did in positive psychology again, a great deal through the work of Antonovsky was move us from the pathogenic model to the salutogenic model. Salutogenes is the foundation, the origin of health. And Antonovsky was talking about, he said that it's important to study illness, mental illness, physical illness, but it's equally important to study the healthy people, the healthy individuals to see how they make it, whether it's people at Harvard. Harvard is a stressful environment. However, there are some people who are able to go through it, to do well, to thrive, flourish and-- well still going through the ups and downs, we all do-- overall experience it as a much more positive experience as a happy experience overall. How do they do that? Why?

Antonovsky said we need to study that so that we understand the origin of health. And he studied these things and it made a big difference in the field as a whole. Quote Antonovsky: "All those familiar with the history of science are aware that important advances come with the formulation of the new questions. The question is the breakthrough; the answer comes with difficulty, but it is the new question that is important. The salutogenic question, I submit to you, (that is what is working) is a radically new question, which provides the impetus for formulating a new paradigm to help us understand health and illness. It has serious implications for researcher and clinician, biological and social scientist alike." It was that question that essentially created the field of positive psychology as well as positive sociology. He was a sociologist by training as well as many other fields. Questions make a difference. Questions create reality.

I want to do an exercise with you now. We'll do quite a few exercises in class. Here's the first one. To illustrate the importance of question, now I'm going to ask you to count the number of geometric shapes that you see on the screen-- no, not this screen, the next screen. And you are Harvard students. It's fine. The next screen, I am going to ask you to count the number of geometric shapes that you see on the screen. It's a very difficult question. I've given it to people around the world. I've given it to mathematicians, to artists who are very visual. And the challenge here is you are only going to have 30 seconds in which to do it, 30 seconds to tell me how many geometric shapes you see on the screen. Ready? 30 seconds. How many geometric shapes do you see on the screen? Go. Ok. So that's 31 seconds. So there should be no problem. Now if you haven't done- I know a couple of you have done this exercise before, but if you haven't done- this exercise before, -- and that's most of you, I'd like you to participate. So how many geometric shapes could you count on the screen? Throw out the numbers. 6 8 48 58 44 36 110 38\N6. 8. 48. 58. 44. 36. 110. 38. How many? Up there? You have a good perspective. 8. Anyone more than 110? Yeah, how many? 300?

200. Anyone more than 200 or less than 6?

Ok. So quite a range. But I grant you that it's a tough question. By the way if you have it on your power points that you downloaded, I took it off on the later downloading, but if you downloaded it,

don't look at it now please. So we have the rate between 6 and 200. Now it's a tough question. In fact, it is so tough that I have no idea how many geometric shapes there are on the screen. But I have another question for you. Now if you know the answer to this question, just put your hand up --and if you haven't done this exercise before, -- just put your hand up. Don't shout it out. If you know the answer, put your hand up: what time was it on the clock? If you know the answer, put your hand up. If you think you know the answer, half way up. Maybe, quarter. And the rest of you may leave now. Ok, so we have a few halves. So out of the room, --how many were there-- probably 600,700 students here, out of 700 Harvard students, five and a half people can read the time on the clock. But I

understand, we all have digital watches today. It's difficult.

So let me ask you an easier question. If you know the answer, just put your hand up. That's right! How many kids were visible on the bus? If you know the answer, put your hand up. If you think you know, half way up. Maybe, quarter. Yeah, most of you think, || what bus?!" You know. "What kids?" Well it was there. So out of

a room of --again -- 700 Harvard students, there are approximately 11 and 3/4. Who can count? But that's Ok. That's not my 55 (Math 55 course in Harvard) here. I understand. Another question. A little bit easier. What was the color of, the dominant color of the left-most geometric shape on the screen? Not the big one on screen, but the left-most geometric shape on the screen. What was the dominant color? If you know the answer, hand right up. If you think you know, half way. Ok. So that's about

12 1/4 people. According to my estimated research, there are probably between 5 and

7 people in this room who are color blind. Really-- according to the statistics. The rest

of you have no excuse. Let's look. So the time on the clock? Someone difficult to obscure the time? 10:10. Well it's a bit difficult. Visible children on the bus? Here's the bus, for those of you still can't see it. 5. And the color. The dominant color of the geometric shape? Yellow. What happened?

I mean these are not very difficult questions. Even the final of positive psychology is going to be difficult than that. I mean, really. A lot more. Why? Well the reason is I asked you a certain question, and that question directed you to a certain part of reality. And that's a good thing. Because if we were focusing on everything all the time, that wouldn't be a good thing. We would be distracted by every single noise, by every single movement. So it's a good thing that we can focus. However, we also need to remember the consequences of this ability to focus that is not always good it's not always helpful. Because as far as you were concerned, there were no children on the bus.

As far as you were concerned, there were only geometric shapes. In other words, my question, for most of you, created a very specific reality, a reality which there were geometric shapes and no children on the bus. Now that has very important implications. Think about the following question: what question is mostly asked by couples beyond the honeymoon phase? so they go through the honeymoon phase whether it's a month, a year or sometimes two years. What questions do they begin to ask after that period of time? "What's wrong? What's not working? How can we improve the relationship?" Now that's a very important question to ask. Very important. But if that's the only question or the only questions that we ask, then that is the only thing we will see. The only things that we will see are our deficiencies, the things that are not working, the things that need to be improved, the weaknesses of my partner, of the relationship. If the only questions that I ask are "what is not working", "what's wrong", "what do I need to improve"-- and again, these are not

questions we need to do away with, they are important. However if they are the only questions, and usually they are the only questions that are asked or primarily asked, then as far as the couple is concerned, not objectively, but as far as the couple is concerned, good things do not exist in the relationship. Just like as far as you are concerned, there were no children on the bus, even though they were right there in front of you, staring at you. But they do not exist. Or think about it at an individual level. This is very important. What is the question that we, most Americans, most Australians, most Chinese, most Israelis, most Europeans, Africans-- what is the question that is mostly asked about the self? And the reason why I mentioned all these places is because this is cross-cultural study. People mostly ask themselves, "what are my weaknesses? What do I need to improve?" Very often to the exclusion of "what are my strengths? What are my virtues? What am I good at?" And if the only question that we ask ourselves are the only questions that are "what are my weaknesses? Deficiencies?", then the only thing we'll see in ourselves are weaknesses and deficiencies. And as far as we are concerned, the good things-- our strengths, our passions, our virtues-- the wonderful things within us do not exist. Just like as far as you are concerned, the children on the bus did not exist.

Now I ask you, could a person who only or primarily focuses on weaknesses and does not see, does not appreciate their strength, their passions, their virtues-- can a person like that experience high levels of self-respect, self-confidence, happiness? And we wonder, why do so many relationships fail? And we wonder, why depression, anxiety and low self-esteem are increasing so much? The intentions are there. They are good. We are asking "How can we improve? What can we do better?" But if we don't also ask the positive question, that part of reality will not exist as far as we are concerned. Just like for the psychologists for decade, the answer to their questions, the solution to the problem that they wanted to solve did not exist, even though it is right there, in front of their very eyes within the successful kids, within their resilience.

Questions create reality. The questions we ask very often determine the quest that we will pursue, the path that we will take, the life that we will lead, whether it's individually, whether it's interpersonally, whether it's organizationally. What is the question? Many of you I know are going

into consulting. What's the question that most consultants ask, Either explicit question or implicit question, the first time when they meet a client? --"What's wrong? What can we improve? What are the weaknesses that we need to strengthen them?" Again, important questions to ask. But if you only ask these questions, then you are ignoring the strengths, the virtues of the organization. And what you are doing, you are enervating, you are weakening the organization over time. It is as important, if not more important, to also appreciate what is working, organizationally, interpersonally, as well as individually. It is important to appreciate what is good.

I mean, look at the word, and —appreciate Two meanings: first meaning-- to say thank you for something, not to take it for granted. And that's a nice thing to do. We shouldn't take for granted our virtues, our successes. We shouldn't take for granted

others. That's a nice thing to do. But appreciate has a second meaning, which is to grow. Money appreciates in the bank. The economy hopefully appreciates. When we appreciate the good, the good appreciates-- the good grows. Unfortunately, the other side of the same coin applies as well. When we don't appreciate the good, when we take it for granted, the good depreciates. And that's what happens in most relationships after the honeymoon phase. That's what happens to most people, especially to very driven people who want to improve, who want to get better. And that's good thing, if that is what makes you happy. At the same time, it's equally important to also appreciate what is good inside me what my strengths, what my virtues are. And we are going to do a lot of that in the course. And again, not to go to the point of narcissism. If anything narcissism-- and we'll talk about it in the second last lecture in the semester- narcissism is not about self-confidence, about self-esteem.

It's exactly the opposite. We are talking about grounded self-confidence. Grounded, generous, benevolent happiness. In order to lead that kind of life, we need to also appreciate what is working, to also focus on, metaphorically speaking, the children on a bus. Stavros and Torres in the wonderful book on relationships, "We see what we look for and we miss much of what we are not looking for even though it is there. Our experience of the world is heavily influenced by where we place our attention."

Questions very often create reality. The first important thing to understand about questions is that we need to understand the questions. And here I want to defer to a very important philosopher, a 20th and 21st century philosopher, who illustrates the importance of understanding questions-- Homer Simpson. If you can just turn down the voice, the sound a little bit, because this is very loud. Thank you. The Simpsons SCULLY: Now we're gonna run a few tests. This is a simple lie detector. I'll ask you a few yes or no questions and you just answer truthfully. Do you understand? HOMER: Yes. Love it. Love it. So the first step is really understanding the question. But once we understand it, it is also important to know what questions are we going to ask. I mentioned earlier that one of the most important things in cultivating resilience is having a role model. I want to share with you now my role model, in fact, the person who is the reason why I decided to become a teacher.

Her name is Marva Collins. Marva Collins was born in Alabama in the 1930s. Her father was African American; her mother, Native American. she was born at a time in a place where there was a great deal of discrimination. Fortunately, for Marva, her father really believed in her and said to her from a very young age, "Marva, you can make something of your life. You can become a secretary." Now the reason why he said secretary is because that was where the glass ceiling, or rather concrete ceiling exists for a person of her ethnic background, a person of her gender. Marva Collins worked hard. She was smart. She succeeded. She made it. And she became a secretary.

After a few years of working as a secretary, doing well, she decided this was not for her and what her calling in life. Her real passion was in teaching. She wanted to be a school teacher. She went to night school. A few years later, she got her teaching certificate, got married and with her husband moved to Chicago. There she joined the public school system in inner city, Chicago. The reality that she found, that she encountered there was a reality of much crime, much drugs and more than anything, hopelessness. The hope of the teachers was to keep the students in school for as long as possible. Why? --So that they don't join the street gangs at the age of 12; so that they are protected from the drugs, from crime. "How can we keep the students in school for as long as possible?" asked the teachers. Marva Collins walks into this reality and says, "Things are going to be different."

On the first day of class, -- she teaches first graders to fourth graders-- --on the first day of class, she says to her students, "We are going to do a lot of believing in ourselves." And she repeats this message over and over and over again, like a broken record throughout the semester and the year and years. "I believe in you. You can do well. You can succeed. Take responsibility for your life. Stop blaming. Stop blaming the government. Stop blaming your teachers. Stop blaming your parents. It is up to you to succeed." And she continues with this message over and over and over again. Having really high expectations of her students, looking at what they are good at, their strength and cultivating those. Miracles begin to happen. These students, considered by many of the teachers to be "unteachable"- these "unteachable" ones by the time that they are in fourth grade are reading Euripides, Emerson and Shakespeare. These "unteachable" ones at the age of 10 are doing high school mathematics. Now rumor begins to spread about Marva Collins, because how can she keep these students in class for so long, when all the other students are just trying to get out of school? She must be using force.

And Marva Collins has enough of these rumors, leave the public school system, opens up her own school in her own kitchen with 4 students and initially, two of them her own kids. Gradually, more and more students join the Marva Collins school, Westside preparatory she calls it. All the students that initially joined the school are public school dropouts. Marva Collins is the last resort before the street. And the miracles continue. Gradually more and more students come in. She has to move out of her home. They wretchedly rent a small shack in Chicago place, freezing in winter, scorching hot in summer. And yet the students are driven by their passion. And they continue. Miracles continue to happen to them. Every one of Marva Collins' students graduates from elementary school. Everyone goes to high school and graduates from high school. Every one of

her students ends up in college and graduates from college. Yes, those "unteachable" ones. Marva Collins lives in a dire poverty for decades, somehow making ends meet. After all, most of her students can't pay. But somehow, month to month, she makes it. 1979 it changes overnight. A producer, from the television CBS program "60 Minutes" finds out about Marva Collins and creates a 15 minutes segment on her. Overnight she becomes famous. November, 1980, new President elect Ronald Reagan calls up Marva Collins. offers her to be his secretary of Education. So I guess her father was right. Marva Collins turns his offers down and says, "I love to teach too much. My place is in the classroom. 8 years later almost to the day, new president elect George Bush Sr. calls Marva Collins once again, offering

her to be his secretary of education. Once again, || I love to teach too much." My place

is in the classroom. In 1995, a wealthy philanthropist donates tens of millions of dollars to Marva Collins. Now there are Marva Collins schools all over the country where thousands of students learn, where hundreds of teachers from all over the world come and see the miracle of Marva Collins. Today there are Marva Collins graduates who are politicians, business people, lawyers, doctors, and more than anything, teachers. Because they know what their teacher has done for them.

I want to show you a brief excerpt of this extraordinary woman. You can turn the volume up a little bit please. This is soft. Marva Collins "Positive Learning" I think I did pretty wonderful. I think I'm bright. I think I am unique. And I'll teach every child of me to think that. When they misbehave, their punishment is they have to write 100 reasons why they are too wonderful to do what they are doing. And they have to be alpha order. I am adorable. I am beautiful. I am courageous. I give them the first ones until they get the hang out of it. I am delightful. I am effervescent. I am fabulous. I am heavenly. I am idolized. I am just wonderful. I am a kindred spirit. I am lovable. I am momentous. I am never, never under line. And it goes on to z. And if they do it again, then they have to use another synonym. They can't use adorable any more. Now the children will say to a new student, I know why you don't behave.

Coz I'm tired of telling Ms. Collins how wonderful I am. Now she is wonderful. Here is her book. Now for all those-- I know that there are quite a few of you who are interested in teaching, and there's one book you want to read. It's this. For all those of you who are interested in leadership and there's one book you want to read. It's this. For all those of you who are or are interested in the future of becoming parents, and there's one book you want to read. It's this. For all the rest of you, if there's one book you want to read.

So what's her message? First of all, she herself is the message as a role model. And she studied with her kids, role models. They read fiction books. They read historical books. They read books about heroes and talk about heroes. They all identify role models. They identify role models in their neighborhood, in their families, constantly doing that, which is exactly what you need to cultivate resilience. First and foremost, she herself is the role model. She has high expectations. We are going to do a lot of believing in ourselves. We are going

to do well, succeed. She expects a lot. She sees the potential. She appreciates that potential in each individual.

Stop blaming others. Take responsibility for your life. Marva Collins is no push-over. If you see her in the classroom, she is tough. She is demanding. At the same time, she respects each individual. She is not one of the Pollyannaish "feel-good", "let's make them all feel good" at all cost. Not at all. She believes in them. She respects them. And she is tough and demanding-- important combination for leadership. It's why I mentioned earlier in the context of great leadership book. There are many very nice ex-CEOs whose primary aim was to be nice and to be liked, the keys to get the job done, to get the work done, while being respectful. Sense of optimism. You can do well. You are going to do well, helping them set goals for themselves and for community. And finally, from focusing on deficiencies to focusing on strength. Howard Gardner from the ED(Education) school here talks about multiple intelligences, says that we need to stop asking whether or not a student is smart. What we need to ask is what is the student smart at. And when we identify what that student is smart at, strong at, virtuous at, good at, then we appreciate it. And when we appreciate it, it and the whole person appreciates. What would happen to a seed-- seed is potential-- flower, tree-- what would happen to a seed, if it is not watered, if no light is shed on it? It will wither and die.

The exact same thing with human potential. If we don't water it, if we don't shed a light on it, it will wither and die. The same with interpersonal relationship potential. If we don't-- we'll talk a lot about relationships: how to cultivate healthy long-term relationships-- if you don't water it, if you don't shed light, if you don't appreciate the good, the good will depreciate. Essentially, what Marva Collins does is create for students-- what the research in resilience does is create a very different model than the conventional wisdom. The paradigm shift essentially is from being a passive victim because the government is not putting enough money, which is an issue, not belittling it. It's important to have those external affect the internal like more resources. But that's not enough. From an inactive, from a passive victim, she changes her

perspective to be an active agent. You are not "unteachable". You can thrive. You can do well. You can succeed. And what she does, essentially, is take them to the extreme of continuum, because every event, every person can be situated somewhere along this continuum, I mean different places with different things. Think about your own life. What are you, passive victim in different situations or an active agent? For example, let's say my girlfriend leaves me. I know when I was an undergrad here.

This was top on my mind: girlfriends leaving me. Yes. We'll talk about that later in this semester when we get to know one another a little bit better. I'm a little bit shy at this point.

But let's say my girlfriend leaves me. If I am the passive victim, what I experience is self-pity. Feel sorry for myself. Roominate-- remember the word? Roominate about the situation and how terrible it is. From a passive victim, I then move to blame: she's terrible; it's her fault; I blame her;

I blame my parents, the way they raise me; I blame her parents; I blame President Bush or whomever. And after I blame, I experience frustration as well as anger. Anger toward her, toward my parents, her parents, President Bush, Hilary, whoever it is. I feel anger. And results-- very few results. Because I wallow in illumination and self-pity.

Let's take the other extreme of the active agent. First of all, by definition, I take action. I take responsibility. I go on to places after experiencing the pain-- it's painful, and next time we are going to talk about the importance of experiencing the pain of giving ourselves what I called the permission to be human, but once I experience it, I take action. I go out there to places where I will meet someone. I go to Pinocchio's

(Pizza place at Harvard). Or another meeting place, the Stax in Whitener (?). Well I guess things have changed at Harvard since I was an undergrad. I take responsibility for it. And then as a result of that-- and we'll talk about research on self-perception theory, research by Daryl Bem. We'll talk a lot about it. You don't need to write it

down now. I'll take action and action will increase our level of confidence. And then more hope and optimism is a result. As we talk about belief in self-fulfilling prophecy lecture, hope and optimism become a self-fulfilling prophecy. I'm much more likely to find someone. I'm certainly much more likely to be happy. Once again, being an active agent does not mean not giving ourselves the time, the space, the permission to experience painful emotions, to go through the emotion. Yes, by all means, we go through it. However, what it is also saying is that we need to find the right time-- it could be immediately, it could be a day or two later-- to take action, to take responsibility, to do things so that our confidence levels in our hope and optimism increase. I want to just say a few things about this idea of being an active agent and responsibility. It applies to your life here at Harvard. It is up to you. It is your responsibility to make the most out of your Harvard experiences. It is your responsibility to make the most out of this class. We, the teaching staff, are certainly going to create conditions for it. We are going to support you in every way that you need.

However, ultimately, it's your responsibility to do it in section. It's your responsibility to make it. One of the first questions that you'll be asking question in section next week when they start to meet is "how can you make this an excellent section?" "What can you do?" "what can you bring? What strength can you bring into the section so that it's an excellent section?" As opposed to blaming, other students, TF, Bush, Clinton, whoever Taking responsibility for it.

There is a wonderful story about responsibility in the book by Nathaniel Branden. We are going to read some stuff by Nathaniel Branden when we talk about self-esteem. Nathaniel Branden talks about six pillars six important pillars in self-esteem. One of those pillars is self-responsibility. People who have high self-esteem take responsibility. People who want to cultivate high self-esteem and

create confidence, take responsibility for their lives and so on. So in his workshop, one of the main things that he says there in his book is that understanding that you have to take responsibility for your life is recognizing understanding that no one is coming. No one is coming to-- the knight in shining armour who will take you to the happily-after land. No one is coming to make your life better for you. No one is coming. You are responsible for your life, for your self-confidence, for your self-esteem, for your happiness. No one is coming. So he was talking about this in one of his workshops that's a three-day workshop. And this was already on the third day and the workshop was going well. The participants were getting a lot out of it. And he said, he told them about this idea that no one is coming. And one of the participants raises his hand and says, "Dr. Branden, that's not true." And Nathaniel Branden asks him, "What do you mean?" And he says, "Dr. Branden, you came", to which Branden

responded, "Yes, I came. But I came to tell you that no one is coming." No one is coming.

It's up to you to make the most out of this experience, 1504, your sections, your Harvard experiences and beyond. And we, as the teaching staff, can't wait to create the right conditions for that to happen. See you on Thursday.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 3

Good morning, everyone. This semester has started, officially today. Glad to see you here. Just a couple of announcements and also hi to the extension school students. Last time we say hi to New Zealand. Today we are saying hi to Ireland. In terms of sectioning for the undergrads and graduate students here, you'll get an email from Sean Achor tomorrow. And you'll put in your section preference. We are sectioning this weekend.

So it will be important that you submit your top preferences. And next week we are starting. Last time, if you remember the question that we ask, the guiding question was "why positive psychology?" And I mentioned three reasons, Why we need it as an independent field as opposed to just being "well, let's do some studies on happiness, on relationships" as it is always being done? The reason why we need positive psychology is to shift the pendulum from the 21:1 ratio that we have today: for every one study on depression or anxiety, we have 21 studies on-- sorry, for one study on happiness or wellbeing, we have 21 studies on depression and anxiety. We want to

shift the pendulum slightly. And I mentioned three reasons why we want to shift this pendulum despite the fact that there are rising levels of depression around the world, that anxiety has become epidemic globally— on college campuses in United States, China, Australia, UK. Despite that fact, I argue that we need to shift the pendulum and do more "positive research", or in other words, research that focuses on what works. And the reason is— the first reason that we gave and we are just finishing up is because the question that we ask, whether it's the research questions that we ask, or

the questions that we ask of ourselves, or our partners, matter. And if our only questions, or primarily our questions are "what is not working? What is the problem? Why are so many kids failing as a result of their circumstances?" If we only ask these questions, we will miss, literally miss an important part of reality, just like you missed

the children on the bus in the exercise. Most of you did. And if we also ask the positive question, then some new possibilities, new quests open up, just like they did for the researchers when they started to ask no longer "why do so many individuals fail?" but started to ask "what do some individuals do and succeed? Why do some individuals succeed despite the unfavorable circumstances?"

And then we have the story of Marva Collins, who exemplifies so many of themes that we'll talk about throughout the course. What Marva Collins did was help her students shift from the passive victim—you are victims of your circumstances, of your upbringing, neighborhood, country, whatever it is—from a passive victim to an active agent. Yes, it's difficult. It's tough. It's unfair. However, it's your responsibility. No one is coming. It's up to you to make that difference in your life. And she made a

difference to thousands of people's lives and continues to do so. In other words, if we look at the case of Chicago school system where Marva Collins was teaching, the conventional, traditional question was-- if you remember—"how can we keep these

students in school for as long as possible? How can we keep them in school beyond the age of 10 or 12 so that they don't join street gangs? So that they are not hurt by drugs or crime?" "How can we keep them safe at school?"—An important question to

ask. However, not enough. Marva Collins comes along and reframes the question. And her question becomes "how can we cultivate the seed of greatness in our student?" And that, once again, made all the difference, because she saw the seed of greatness in each student. She saw the strength, the virtues in each single student. A seed, a strength, a virtue, a competence that other teachers did not see, because they did not ask this question; because they asked, metaphorically speaking, "how many geometric shapes do you see on the screen?" And they completely missed the children on the bus. They completely missed the seed of greatness. And when we don't see the seed of greatness, when we don't water it and shed a light on it, it withers and dies, which is unfortunately the fate of most human potential.

Wherever we go, that is the fate of most human potential—interpersonally, relationships, in most organizations, in most universities, in most individuals.

Questions make a difference, which is why it is also important to ask the positive psychology question, which is the salutogenic question: "What is source of health? What is the source of success? What is the source of wellbeing?" So that's the first

reason. The second reason—before I go to the second reason, if Marva Collins is here

today, here's the question she would be asking us: "How can we cultivate the seed of greatness in ourselves and families, in our communities and organizations, in our nation and in our world?" When we ask this question-- this very important question, suddenly we see possibilities that we didn't see before. Second reason for having positive psychology's field of study and focusing on what works and focusing on research in happiness, relationships and wellbeing is because happiness does not spontaneously rise when take unhappiness away. Now happiness and unhappiness, or happiness and neurosis, psychosis and depression, are interconnected, of course. It's very difficult to be happy if we are experiencing severe depression or anxiety. So they are certainly interconnected. However, just getting rid of the anxiety and the depression will not in and of itself make us happy, which is the conventional wisdom today, which is the conventional wisdom of many psychologists practicing psychology— "Well, let's just get rid of that depression and everything will be fine."

It won't.

The analogy to explain this is think about the ability to enjoy food. A gourmet meal. Now if we have indigestion, it's very difficult to enjoy food. So yes, we first need to get rid of the indigestion. However, that in and of itself does not guarantee us that we enjoy food. We have to go out and eat the gourmet food to enjoy it. Just getting rid of indigestion is not sufficient. We need the next step. In many ways you can look at most of our experiences, psychological effective experiences on a continuum, where some of them fall below the zero, the negative experiences or the

painful experiences and the positive or the pleasurable experiences between the zero and the positive. Neurosis, anger, anxiety, depression, psychosis— to name a few-- on the negative side, the painful side; wellbeing, satisfaction, joy, excitement, happiness on the other side which is the side of positive psychology studies. Again, getting rid of the negative does not guarantee us the positive, which is why already in the 1940s, David Henry Thoreau (should be Henry David Thoreau), wrote that most men lead lives of quiet desperation. It's Ok. There's nothing really wrong. But it's just somewhere there in the words of Pink Floyd "people are comfortably numb". Comfortably numb. Not enough. How can we get beyond that "comfortably numb"? How can we get beyond that "quiet desperation"? To excitement, to joy, to happiness? In order to do that, we need to cultivate these traits. Once again, they don't spontaneously emerge once the painful experiences go away. And that is why we need positive psychology. Positive psychology essentially focuses on the health model, Salutogenesis. What is the source of health, physical, psychological, emotional? How do we get people to flourish, intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, interpersonally, intra-personally? How do we get them to thrive beyond just getting rid of what is not working in their lives?

And under that model we see, to extremes on many levels. Here, the first level: do we focus on

weaknesses, which is the disease model, say let's get rid of weaknesses? Or do we focus on strength? While you ask people this question, and this was done by the Gallup organization. A poll-- global poll, whether it's in Japan, China, United States or Europe: most people think that it's more important to focus on their weaknesses if they are to succeed. Big mistake. The people who focus primarily, not only-- remember the "also"— who shift the pendulum, who focus more on their

strength, are not only happier, they are also, on the long run, more successful. It applies to leadership as well. Positive psychology says let's focus also on our strength at least as much. In an organization, as well as on the individual level, are we focusing

most on overcoming deficiencies or building the competencies— what we are good at-- and getting better at it? What our natural inclination, individually or organizationally— do we focus on that and then build on that? Again, tie to success as well as wellbeing, if we are more toward the positive side. How do we live our lives?

Running away from painful experiences? Or actively seeking pleasure? Running away from unhappiness? Or adhering to the Declaration (Declaration of Independence) and pursuing happiness?

Now that may look quite similar-- for example, someone may be working 80 hours a week, running away from something-- running away from issues at home, running away from dealing intra-personal issues and then may look exactly the same as the person who works 80 hours a week and who's extremely passionate about what she does. May look the same but from the inside, they feel very different. One is the disease model: let's run away from what is not working. The other is the health model: let's pursue my passions, what I love to do. The disease model, the optimum level is the zero: let's just be Ok; let's just not hurt. And again, that's important to get rid of

hurt. It's important to get rid of depression. But with the health model, they are saying that's not enough; let's go beyond that. Let's go to the excitement, to the fun. Because the ideal is not just a tensionless state. It is the creative tension. We'll talk about it. We'll read about it. When we do "flow". Flow is the state where we are excited, where we are engaging what we are doing, where it's much more than being "comfortably numb". In fact, it's a little bit uncomfortable. It's being outside of our comfort zone. It's being in our stretch zone— not the panic zone, where it hurts-- the stretch zone, where there is excitement, where there's some nervousness. There is also growth there.

So what do you want? Where do you want to go? What do you want to pursue? Do you want to run away from pleasure-- run away from pain? Do you want to run away from unhappiness? Or do you want to pursue happiness and pleasure? Do you want to focus primarily on your deficiencies or your weaknesses? Or your strength? What is

the optimum? what is the ideal? Is there a glass ceiling-- the zero? Or can it go on and on— more excitement, more enjoyment, more passion? Now there's something frightening

about the health model. Because there is no limit and there is less prescription there certainly today than in the disease model. Positive psychology, the field of health psychology is in infancy. There's much more research, much more advice on how to get rid of depression and how do I pursue my strength. But fortunately, again, this is why positive psychology as a network of scholars applying themselves to these ideas and ideals.

It's so important because today you'll see throughout the semester that there are so many more tools that we can apply to our lives, to go beyond the zero. That's not all. So I said there are three reasons. It's about where we focus, focus creates reality; it's about happiness is not just a negation of unhappiness; the third reason why positive psychology is important is because positive psychology and the areas that we study and more importantly, apply within the field of positive psychology, do not just take us from the zero to the positive. They also help us deal with the negative. They help us deal with anxiety, depression and painful experiences and emotions. When we cultivate the positive, we are essentially focusing on prevention. Let me explain. What has been found over the last 10 years and a little bit longer is the most effective way of actually dealing with a rising levels of depression in our culture, with individual depression or anxiety is actually not to focus on the depression and anxiety directly—

that is important as well. It is found that the most effective way of dealing with this phenomenon was actually to cultivate the positive, to cultivate personal strengths, to cultivate and identify one's passions, to ask a question such as "what is meaningful to me in my life? What's my purpose? Why am I here? What do I really, really want to do once I graduate?" People who ask these questions and spend time on these questions, are much more likely to begin a quest that is not the avoid of painful emotions— no quest is— but the quest is more enjoyable, more pleasurable, more

meaningful and also, more successful as it turns out. But more importantly, more successful in what I call the "the ultimate currency"— just as the currency of happiness and wellbeing.

The reason is because there are two different approaches to deal with illness: one, the positive psychological approach is that the illness is the absence of health, as opposed to health is the absence of illness. I mean, think about the disease model. The disease model is "we are sick because we are ill"— do you listen to that? We are sick

because we are ill. That was very profound. You should think about it for a while here. I'll let a time just to marinate it little bit so that you can. Let me start that again. If we take away the illness, then we become healthy. That's the model, the conventional model. Take away the illness. You'll become healthy. It's good. The positive psychological model is slightly different. It is "you are ill because you don't have enough health in your life, because you are not pursuing those things that make you healthy". And what make you healthy? The things I spoke about before: pursuing meaning, purpose; cultivating healthy relationships. If we don't have these things, that's when the illness comes in. Now the difference between the two models, the

health model and the disease model is more than just semantic. Here is Abraham Maslow talking about neurosis, "Neurosis is a falling short of what one could have been and even one could say, of what one should have been, biologically speaking that is if one had grown and developed in an unimpeded way. Human and personal possibilities have been lost. The world has been narrowed and so has consciousness. Capacities have been inhibited." Let me explain what he means here. What he means is that we are ill because we do not cultivate what we are about enough. We do not become self-actualized. We don't do what we are supposed to do. We diminish ourselves and that's when we become ill. That's when we are unwell. This is very different from the disease model that says, "Ok, you are unwell. Deal with that illness." What he's saying: "No. You are unwell. Focus on your health. Strengthen

your health. Because you are ill, because you are not focusing enough on your health." He calls that, and I quote, "a failure of personal growth".

That's when we experience neurosis. When we don't cultivate ourselves enough, we don't cultivate our relationship enough, that's when we fail. And what the positive psychology is all about is precisely that— cultivating personal growth, working on the positive. And we work on the positive on what comes of this side of the graph that you saw up there. On the positive side, when we cultivate these things, it also helps us

deal much better with the negative when it arises. I want to quote Martin Seligman, who talks about precisely this idea: "In the last decade psychologists have become concerned with prevention. How can we prevent problems like depression or substance abuse or schizophrenia in young people who are genetically vulnerable or who live in worlds that nurture these problems? How can we prevent murderous schoolyard violence in children who have access to weapons, poor parental supervision, and a mean streak?" Now he's asking this question and the disease model response to this is we need to help them deal directly with depression, with their anxiety and with their unhappiness so that we can prevent all these social ills—

whether it's violence, whether it's unhappiness. What he's saying here is the following: "What we have learned over fifty years is that the disease model does not move us closer to the prevention of these serious problems. Indeed the major strides in prevention have largely come from a perspective focused on systematically building competency, not correcting weakness." In other words, the health model: let's work on competencies. Let's work on strength. Let's work on relationship. Let's help them identify something meaningful in their life, their passion. And that's how we will, over time, also help what comes off on the negative side. Health model versus the disease model that goes directly to deal with the disease. Now again, Seligman is not saying "to the exclusion of"; he's saying "also".

He continues, "We have discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness: courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance, the capacity for flow and insight, to name several. We've shown that

learning optimism prevents depression and anxiety in children and adults, roughly halving their incidence over the next 2 years. Similarly, I believe that if we wish to prevent drug abuse in teenagers who grow up in a neighborhood that puts them at risk, the effective prevention is not remedial. Rather, it consists of identifying and amplifying the strengths that these teens already have." It's exactly what Marva Collins did: focused on the health and cultivated it, watered it and shed a light to it, realized it. We'll talk about all these ideas throughout the course.

What health model does— this is the theme we go through all the course is cultivate capacity. It cultivates the capacity to deal with the negatives when these arrive—

whether it's negative and painful experiences in relationships, or in ourselves. What does that mean?

Let me draw two analogies. Cultivating capacity is about creating a strong psychological immune system. These are the words of Nathaniel Branden. Psychological immune system. What happens when we have a strong physical immune system? Does it mean we don't get ill? Of course not. We do. But it means that we get ill less often and when we do get sick, we recover more promptly. This is exactly what cultivating strength, optimism, sense of purpose, meaning, mindfulness— this is exactly what these characteristics do. They enlarge transform—

the way we see, the way we experience the world, enlarge the capacity of the form and that's we are better able to deal the inevitable difficulties. And there are inevitable difficulties. No life is completely immune to those. So it strengthens our immune system. And another analogy we can use is of an engine. If we have a small engine, and we have to pull the car up a steep hill, a difficult hill, the engine is more likely to collapse, to blow up. Whereas If our engine is large, we are much more likely to get

up that hill, and to do it gracefully with relative ease. So what we are doing: we cultivate the positive; we are strengthening our, metaphorically speaking, psychological "engine"; and we are better able to deal with the negative to zero, not to mention the fact that we are also able to become happier. Because happiness does not just come spontaneously when we negate unhappiness.

I want to go back to our local village. So remember last time I put up the article by the Crimson (Harvard Crimson magazine) that was unfortunately I couldn't find a more recent one-- that was 2004? But the situation is rather similar today. And one of the things that the Crimson article said is that we need to put more resources into mental health at Harvard. And that's important, I agree. However, it's only part of the

picture. in some different places as well-- not only, as well. Because it's just not enough to put these resources in places that help us deal with our depression and anxiety and unhappiness directly. It is also important to put these resources in places that help us cultivate capacity,

the capacity to deal with these difficulties and hardships when they arise and they will arise. In other words, there has to be more resources put in places such as helping students identify their passions when they come here, helping students identify their sense of meaning in life, helping students identify what they really, really, really want to do, helping students overcome the pull, the external pull that is often there, taking them away from their core, helping them chip away those limitations, those voices, helping students identify who they really are, helping students identify their strengths and pursuing those while here at Harvard.

All these capabilities, all these skills or skills that are mostly— and I'm not just talking about Harvard— globally-- not taught in schools. And we need to teach them. This is not to say that what is going at Harvard with numerous resources that we do have here is not important. It is very important. Just take a small example: the Bureau of Study Counsel. I don't know how many of you have used that resource. I've used it as an undergrad. I still use it now, doing some work with them. I did some work with

them last year. And they are wonderful.

And at the same time, we also need to cultivate the positive, to think more of the zero to the positive side of the equation as well. And this is what positive psychology does and I hope this is what 1504 to some extent will help do. To summarize, "the message of the positive psychology movement is to remind our field that it has been deformed. Psychology is not just the study of disease, weakness, and damage it also is the study of strength and virtue, Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong; it also is building what is right. Psychology is not just about illness or health; it is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play. And in this quest for what is best, positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, self-deception, or hand waving; instead, it tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behavior presents in all its complexity." It's about bridging the Ivory tower and the Main Street in the area that I believe is the most important one and talks to each and every one of us. I want to move on now. I want to move on to the next selective lectures— two or two and a half lectures, where I am going to be talking about the

basic premises of this course. As I said earlier, this course is not a survey course of positive psychology. It's very selective. It's about the question of questions. What can help us individuals, what can help our community become happier-- not happy, happier. So by the end of these three months semester, you are happier than you were before. You are from now, you'll be hopefully happier than you were at the end of the

semester. And so on and so on. So what are the basic premises? Where am I coming here when I think about this course? Well what I want to do is to share with you the five basic premises. And these premises are going to be presented as something and—

essentially it's opposite. So that were clear from the outset: where we are coming from, where I am coming from, where the teaching staff is coming from— and also so that we can build the

foundation of the course.

Remember I talk those of you who were here the first time: this course is built like a spiral. Everything is intra-connected, what I talked about in the first class is connected to what I'm going to talk about today, is going to be connected to lecture 19. So in many ways the premises, coupled with what we discussed in the first two lectures, build the foundation of that spiral, upon which everything else will be built. So here are the five basic premises. I'll go through them briefly now and elaborate on each in the next couple of lectures, interweaving them with studies, research as well as applications. First, this course as I mentioned first is about bridge building: bridge building among disciplines, eclectic, and bridge building in terms of academia and Main street. the specialization is very often dominant in academia. The approach of this course, with all its challenges, is the opposite. Once again I wouldn't be teaching this class, if I didn't change is possible. There is a lot of research in psychology, a lot of evidence that shows how difficult change is. So I will argue that change is possible, whether it's individual change, organizational change. And we'll start to look at how it's possible. Just the very basic level of the spiral. We have an entire week just devoted to change. We will elaborate on that: techniques, methods, tools. Third, premise related to the first internal factors primarily determine happiness— this is what I'm going to argue for— is opposed to happiness which is primarily function of external circumstances.

Not saying that the external circumstances are not important, we should focus also on improving them, bettering them, whether for ourselves, for society at large. However, happiness primarily— not only, primarily—is dependent on how we perceive the world, on the form, on our interpretation, on our perception. Human

nature must be obeyed This, in many ways, captures conflict that has gone throughout human history, whether you look at politics, whether you look at religion, whether you look at philosophy as well as today, psychology. How do we look at human nature? Is human nature flawed and therefore needs to be perfected? Or is human

nature flawed maybe something we don't like but we need to accept it and work with it? I'm going to argue for the latter of what I just said, for the fact that human nature needs to be obeyed with all its flaws, with all its shortcomings, as opposed to attempting to perfect it on the psychological level. We'll get to that next time. Controversial, the very important foundation of mental health and wellbeing. And finally, what I am going to argue for is that happiness isn't ought to be the ultimate end which we pursue and that is also a moral claim, as opposed to happiness just being another secondary pursuit and there are pursuits—there are higher, more

important, more moral than that. Once again, may sound controversial. I'll try reconcile the disease, the unhappiness that you may experience thinking about that. Again, more on that next time. So let me begin with bridge building. Here I am going back to what I talked about right at the very beginning of the first lecture. The idea of bridging Ivory tower and Main Street. There are many people in academia, outside academia, who divide the world essentially

into two. They talked about the real world that is outside, that is dirty, impure, profane versus academia, which is lofty, idealistic, sacred. Sacred versus the profane. This distinction hurts. It hurts academia and hurts people who are outside of academia. Alfred North Whitehead, the philosopher: "The careful shielding of a university from the activities of the world around us is the best way to chill interest and to defeat progress. Celibacy does not suit a university. It must mate itself with action. || This is very important for university.

Talked about a second psychology. He said second psychology is a psychology that leaves the labs that draws on the research done in the labs that is important and meaningful, however, doesn't only focus on that. It goes out to the outside world,

interacts, gets its hand and mind dirty, does work outside and then applies its work and learns from "the dirty experiences" and brings it back to the lab and so on and so on in an upward spiral. He called it the important second psychology, which is what Alfred North Whitehead is also talking about. Now you may be sitting here and most

of you aren't going to academia. And you are thinking to yourself, "Ok, fine. So university, academia must make itself with action. What does it have to do with me? How is relevant to me?" Not only is it relevant to you, it has everything to do with you. And here's why. What the world needs, more than anything else, are practical idealists.

For 6 years, I was a resident tutor in Leverets House when I was a graduate student and then I also started to teach. And what struck me most about conversations that I had, either in Leverett or other houses, were students is their sense of mission, your sense of mission, your desire to do good, to make the world a better place. And as I followed many of the students after they graduate, whether the students who work with me here as undergrads or students who I tutored, when I followed the path, it wasn't just empty words. These students went ahead and did wonderful things, whether it was right out of college, whether it was once they established themselves, but there was always this, the back of their mind, very often fore of their minds, "How can I make this world a better place?" Passionate. Idealistic. Good-- in the deep sense, good. This desire to make a difference come into just about all students. There are many people who talk about this generation as the "ME" generation: all I care about, all this generation cares about is "well, let me just make more money", "let me just get a bigger house", "let me just be more successful and accrue more eclats, more prestige". This is a false stereotype. Yes, eclats, prestige, money is important. It's important to most people in the world. A big deal. But were these people who have these stereotypes— were they (?) is that they see just that? And they don't see the desire to make a difference.

1800 students at Harvard each year, about 1800 students are members of PBHA (Phillips Brooks House Association). That's not all. There are other students who outside PBHA and who volunteer. Just about every single one of you. At least if we

look at the statistics, just about every single one of you, very soon, after you leave Harvard, will join an organization, whether--it could be your primary job or not— an organization that is a social enterprise, not for profit, something to better the world.

You'll be on boards of such organizations. You'll donate money to such organizations. Harvard grads are generous with their time, with their money, with their efforts, whether the business school, the law school, college, Med school, Ed school— you

give a lot, because you care. Again whether it's money, whether it's time-- usually both. False stereotypes. There are also false stereotypes about Americans. Americans, empirically speaking— just empirically speaking about the Harvard students, looking

the trends and statistics-- empirically speaking, Americans are the most generous people in the world. Not just because they have more money to give, yes, Americans have more money to give and they give a lot more money, whether it's in food, whether it's in medical aid. Americans also spend the most time-- this is a research done (?)— Americans spend the most time out of any other people in the world

volunteering in average four hours a week, volunteering outside their job which may also have a social objective more than any other people in the world. Once again, false stereotypes about this wonderful country. And this is wonderful. This is wonderful to see, wonderful to be here, whether it's Harvard, whether it's America-- a real privilege. You see, many of you, not far from now, you will be in influential positions. Will you be able to do a lot of good in a for-profit organization, not for profit organization, on the board of your previous school, with your money, with your time?

However— and here is the however— I've met many grad students with me or students when I was a tutor who express their frustration to me. They said to me, —You know, I had all the good intentions in the world. I have all the good intentions in the

world. I want to do good. I've donated my time, my money. But I feel that something is missing. I feel that I've fallen short of my potential to really make a difference."

Why? Because good will and idealism, while necessary, they are not sufficient. Not enough. Because very often, with very good intentions, we may fall short of what we are capable of doing, or in some situations, even hurt more than help. And we'll look at some of these studies, hopefully still today, with very good intentions actually hurt more they helped. Psychologists for decades had very good intentions about helping at risk population. A lot of money-- millions, millions of dollars went into that. With very little effect. Why? Because they didn't ask the question that they needed to ask, which was, in that particular case, the salutogenic question: why do some individuals succeed despite unfavorable circumstances? There were very good intentions before this question was asked. There was a lot of idealism. It wasn't enough. Very often, some of these

interventions engendered the passive victim mentality, as opposed to the active agent mentality that Marva Collins instilled, the programs by Karen Reivich and Martin Seligman instill. And this is where psychology can help. Because we can take the research and apply it. We can take the research and apply it, which goes back to the point why it is so important to bridge Ivory tower and Main Street. Most of these research is not applied. So for example: how many teachers working in the classroom day in and day out know about the Pygmalion effect? The Pygmalion effect that we are going to talk about next week or the week after, shows how teachers' expectations are self-fulfilling prophecies.

And if we have high expectations, if we see the seed of greatness in the students, that seed of greatness is more likely to flourish. Or if we don't appreciate it, it will depreciate—wither and die. How many teachers know about these studies? And how they create through their beliefs the self-fulfilling prophecy when it comes to their

students? How many teachers know about Marva Collins? Every teacher in the world on the first day of teacher training need to learn about Marva Collins and Pygmalion effect. They don't do that. How about this? Self-esteem. How do you increase self-esteem? If I have to do a poll here, most people, guaranteed, would say praise

people. Praise people. Praise children. It will enhance their self-esteem. Right. Partially right. And if it's taken as the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, it's detrimental. Because there is a lot of research that shows when we praise people indiscriminately, we are actually in the long run potentially hurting them more than helping them, whether it's their wellbeing, as well as their success. But the self-esteem movement mostly says praise people, praise children all the time. And again, that's

important. But it's also important to know how to praise. How many people are familiar with the work of the Stanford psychologist, Carol Dweck. Well, you are going to be familiar with it in a few weeks. Many idealists with good intentions are not. And they continue to support or to practice self-esteem as indiscriminate praise, ultimately hurting more than helping. How many psychologists, or rather how many interventionists with good intentions are familiar with the work of Albert Bandura on self-efficacy? And how you cultivate that? Not enough. And very often, more harm than good is created. How many psychologists are familiar with this new emerging field of the mind and the body? How many know about the studies that cheerful example that yoga practice diminishes significantly, more than any other interventions that they tried, the likelihood of second-time offenders when they practice it in jail? After their release, they are much less likely to return to jail if they do some yoga there. Strange, but true.

How many people know that—and this is connected to my first point—that doing meditation actually literally transforms our brain, making us more susceptible to positive emotions and more resilient in the face of painful emotions. How many people know that three times a week physical exercise, 30 minutes each time has the

same effect as our most powerful psychiatric drugs? Three times a week for 30 minutes. How many psychologists or psychiatrists prescribe "run three times a week and see me in the morning"? Not enough. That's practical idealism coupled together. How are in conflict resolution, the dominant theme of most people with good

intentions want to resolve conflict is let's get the people together, let's get them to talk, and they and we will live happily ever after. Well we have research from 1954—those of you who take social psych—Muzafer sheriff, showing that the contact

hypothesis which is just get people to talk to one another, doesn't work; in fact very often it worsens the situation—very often the conflict actually gets worse as a result of just getting together and talking, that the contact is not enough, that what you need, in the words of Muzafer sheriff and later elaborated on by Elliot Aronson—what you need is a super ordinate goal—a goal that you have carry out together, that you cannot do by yourself—carry out together with a conflicting group. And that's how over time you resolve conflicts, not just bring people together. Now as you can

imagine, this is very close to home for me. Because there were many people on both sides of the Arab/Israeli conflict who wanted to end it, many people in this country who wanted to end it. So what did they do? Let's just get them together. Let's get them in a room, whether it was in Camp David, whether it was in Oslo or in Egypt. Let's just get them together to talk, to resolve their conflict and their issue and then we will all live happily ever after.

What happened? The situation worsened. Now we've known that. Muzafer sheriff showed that in 1954 that it is the most likelihood outcome of just contact hypothesis, just getting them to be together. And there were many people trying to resolve the conflict, not just in the Middle East, else in the world, with very good intentions but very often making inadvertently the matters worse. Idealism and good intentions are not enough. We need to merge, to mate the research with the practice. And this is where you come in, taking it seriously. Now when I take it seriously, there is a problem here because sometimes research doesn't deliver good news. It would be much easier and nicer if we could just simply get Israelis and Arabs together and the conflict would end. It would be much nicer and easier, smoother, it would be much easier, if we could just cultivate children self-esteem by giving them positive

feedback—telling them how wonderful they are. It's easy to do, right? It feels good. They feel good. We feel good. But in the long run, it doesn't help, if it's only that.

Much easier. And research very often delivers bad news, saying it's not enough-- the contact; it's not enough to praise. And then people choose subconsciously, not consciously to ignore the research and go with her heart. And that's important to go with your heart. But it's important to with the heart and the mind.

Imagine if an aeronautics engineer woke up in the morning and said, "you know, the Law of Gravity thing really makes things difficult for me. It's a pain. Things would be so much easier without the law of gravity. The design would be simpler." And he designs airplane and he ignores the law of gravity. What kind of airplane machine would he or she design? A failure. Aeronautics engineer takes into consideration of reality. And reality-- there's Law of Gravity. We deal with that. Similarly, what research shows us is reality: what's out there, what's working and

what's not working. And we need to conform to it. Take it into consideration. And it's up to you, to take responsibility, to bridge the Ivory tower and Main Street. You are being exposed in 32 classes fraught your Harvard career to the most rigorous thinking on different topics have you take it and apply it, whether it's psychology, whether it's in economics, obviously in engineering or computer science, where it's done much more readily than in social sciences and humanities. It's important to take responsibilities, because no one else is going to do it for you. No one is coming. Premise 2: To be a practical idealist, the foundation of it has to be the belief that change is possible. Because if the change was not possible on the individual level, on the society level, why am I doing what I am doing? Why would I spend time? Let me just be a hedonist, trying to enjoy my life as much as possible. Now for many of you, when you look at this you may say, "Well, Ok, yes, change is possible. I believe that and why do we need to have it as a basic premise of the course, as opposed to change is illusive?"

Well, in the context of a psychology course, it's anything but trivial that change is possible. Let me share with you one study to illustrate what I mean. The Minnesota Twin study, one of the most famous studies in the field of psychology, was done by Lykken and Tellegen, two prominent psychologists. And what they did was they wanted to understand how much do genes matter. How much is it about nature versus nurture? So how do you test that? You look at identical twins, monozygotic twins who share the same genetic profile. And you look at those who are reared apart. Because if they are reared by the same parents, one could argue, "Well they came out very similar because same environment: they look the same; they go to the same schools; same parents, and so on." But what if you are able to find identical twins who were separated at birth, and reared in radically different environments. Well you could. And they found significant number of those, reared in, sometimes different continents. And they studied them. And what they found remarkably was significant similarities among these twins, sometimes to the points of unbelievable. Like one set of twins—I

think they found the wives with the same name. They were reared in different countries, didn't know about each other until the age of 37— married similar wives, enjoyed drinking the same beer, called their children by the same names. There were some mind-boggling similarities. And this is an exception, but there were quite a few of those exceptions. But more interesting for psychologists was that their personality was incredibly similar. And very interesting for positive psychologists, those concerned with wellbeing and happiness: their wellbeing and happiness levels were incredibly similar. Even if they were raised in radically different environments. Lykken and Tellegen published a paper, a very influential paper in the 80s, which they called "Happiness is a Stochastic Phenomenon". And they end this paper with the following quote: "It may be that trying to be

happier is as futile as trying to be taller and is therefore counterproductive." This quote made me very unhappy on two accounts. This was a very influential quote. This appeared in New York Times. They

Coz what are we doing here? If this is the outcome of the research, a rigorous research that they did— not an easy research to go and look around the world, what can we do about it? Here is my response to that: Very simply, change is possible. And again, don't take my word for it of course. Let me discuss that further-- elaborate. There is account of evidence where people actually do change and we have research showing that people going to therapy very often change as the a result of therapy. Work by Albert Bandura, Stanford psychologist shows that very often people encountering one special sentence, reading it or hearing it from something, that sentence can change their lives, reading it on certain book, having certain experiences— there is this concept of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). There

is also a concept of Post-Traumatic Growth. So people change-- up or down in their level of happiness is a result of their experiences. So there is counter evidence that shows that not everyone, level of wellbeing is determined by their genes. In fact, there is research that shows yes genes do matter and they matter a lot, as we'll talk about during the week on change. Other things matter as well. And the error that Lykken and Tellegen and many others make when they generalize and say "change is not possible" is what I call "the error of the average". Yes, on average, when you look at this group of 40 or 50 twins reared apart, when you look at the average, they are just about the same. However, that's not looking at the individuals because while many of them are the same, not all are the same.

It reminds me of a joke about the statistician who drowned in a pool with an average height of 10 inches. You see you cannot tell the height or the depth rather of a pool based on the average. Because that pool may be average of 10 inches, but maybe it has places that are 20 feet deep, if it's a large pool. The same when you look at the average of individuals and twins. The majority on average, they are extremely similar.

But there are also outliers. And very often, it's the outliers, the differences that are the

ability to understand when and where change is possible. The question when we see exceptions, whether it's the Lykken and Tellegen study, where we do see exceptions— not all twins were the same, majority were, but not all— the question is no longer

whether or not change is possible, but rather how is change possible. Once again, the exception proves the rule. And the research that argues that it's not possible to change, is detrimental. Think about an eight year old girl, who's very unhappy, and then reads some magazine about that study, saying that basically you are genetically set point what you are born with is there for

life. She's unhappy. She feels anxious and miserable as an 8 year old. And she says to herself, "That's it. That's my lot in life. I was born unlucky." And that, very often, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. And she remains unhappy. Sometimes it even makes her less happy than she was before. Because now she's also helpless.

Change is possible. You know I often say that I am the right the person to teach positive psychology. Why? Because I wasn't born with "happy genes". I was born with, genetically speaking, relatively high level of anxiety, inclination toward rumination, over-examination— we'll talk about that later in the course. I went into

the positive psychology, into the field of psychology, as I mentioned in the first lecture, because I was unhappy here. And over time, as a result of many of these studies, result of examination result of asking also the right questions, I have become happier. So on a personal level, I know it's possible to become happier. Now I am happier today than I was fifteen years ago when I started. I hope to be happier 15 years from today than I am today. It's a life-long process. But it is possible. And many people show that it's possible. And those who argue it's not possible and use science to argue for that, very often, are hurting more than helping the field. Now by the way Lykken and Tellegen were interviewed recently in TIME magazine issue of happiness. Let me quote to you what they said. This is in 2005-- Lykken: "I made a dumb

back on their statement. It was a sensational statement at the time. It certainly is possible. So how do we do research that's more responsible, that does not lead to detrimental results?

And at the same time, true. We don't want to invent research. Research is about identifying things that really occur/happen in reality. So one of the first things that I'll argue for in terms of healthy research is "let's also focus on what is working". That's first thing that we discussed in the past lecture. The second thing that I will argue for in addition to studying what works is also to study the best. What do I mean by best? Let's not just study what makes people happy. Let's not just study happy people. Let's not just study happy relationships and good relationships. Let's study the happiest people. Let's study the most successful relationships and learn from that. That is a radically different approach than studying just the average. Because what I am saying here is "let's not study the average", let's study the top five percent so that we can understand the phenomenon better. The person who talks about this is Abraham Maslow. When he talked about "growing-tip" statistics. Let me read to you-- this is taken from his book: "What this kind of research design means is a change in our conception of statistics, and especially of sampling theory. What I am frankly espousing here is what I have been calling "growing-tip statistics," taking my title from the fact that it is at the growing tip of a plant that the greatest genetic action takes place." What he's saying is that "let's study the sages, the saints, the extraordinary people, the arrowhead" so that we can understand and realize the potential in all people. Let me quote him in greater length. This is very important, which is why I am doing it: "If we want to know how fast a human being can run, then it is no use to average out the speed of a "good sample" of the population; it is far better to collect Olympic gold medal

winners and see how well they can do. If we want to know the possibilities for spiritual growth, value growth or moral development in human being, then I maintain that we can learn most by studying our

most moral, ethical, or saintly people. On the whole I think it fair to say that human history is a record of the ways in which human nature has been sold short. The highest possibilities of human nature have practically always been underrated. Certainly it seems more and more clear that what we call "normal" in psychology is really a psychopathology of the average, so undramatic and so widely spread that we don't even notice it ordinarily."

You see, the implications of what he's saying here? Essentially what he's saying is "let's not just study why do most individuals fail; let's also study why do some-- not many— but why do some individuals succeed despite the circumstances". Let's not study just the average that says that people can't really change. Let's study those people who have changed, who have literally transformed their lives and those lives around them. This is a radical approach to research. This is a radical approach to the search, to studying ourselves as well. Because very often, if we only study the average, we only see the average, we only see the geometric shapes and completely missed the children on the bus. And very often, the answer to some of our most pressing questions lies in the extraordinary— lies on the children on the bus. Now does anyone other than me— because I admit that I fall into this category— but anyone other than me feel a little bit disease when I talk about this? Seriously, a little bit disease when I talk about "let's focus on studying the best— the saint, the sages, the extraordinary"? I feel disease. I'm sure some of you feel that too. Because after all, isn't that elitist? Shouldn't we study the average because we concern not just with elites? We are concerned with the average. So there are two answers to that— why I still maintain, and I must admit I still feel some disease every time I teach this, every time I think

about this and I think too, why it is so important to study the best, why the "growing-tip" statistics is such an important approach to research that I encourage my students to carry out.

First of all, because it is not to the exclusion of the average. Just like positive psychology does not say "let's exclude what's not working; let's exclude study of pathology". Similarly, "growing-tip" statistics is not saying "let's not study the average". It says "let's also study the best". So this is the first thing to alleviate the concern of elitism. The second issue, the second response is even more important. Because everyone benefits, when we study the best. And the "average"-- whatever that means, the "average" benefits even more than the best of this kind of studies. Why? For example: the study of resilience. We could have gone on and studied the average at-risk population for decades and centuries. And very little advances would have been made. Very little advances were made. It was only when we started to study those "best" examples, those successful kids, those "super" kids as they were initially named. It was only when we started to study those that we actually understood how we can best help that population. And once we applied our studies-- the

resilience issue, everyone benefited and continued to benefit from it. That's an example of "growing-tip" statistics research. Or how about the study of meditation? So I want to study how to meditate. Do I go out to Harvard yard and take a random sample of sophomores to study meditation? Or do I go to a mountain top in Tibet and study the people who have been doing it for decades? Of course I go and study them! This is exactly what psychologists did! And they studied their brain— we'll talk about it when we talk about meditation— and they illustrated how their brain is transformed through meditation. Psychologists, like Jon Kabat Zinn, Richard Davidson and Herbert Benson, were able to take what they learned from these extraordinary, best individuals and apply it to other people's lives so that now I benefit from meditation when I do it for 15 minutes or 20 minutes a day. And millions of other people, "the average", benefit a great deal because of the study of the best, of the "growing-tip". How about relationships? Can you imagine a study of relationships throughout human history that focuses on the average? What's the average relationship in human history? The average relationship in human history is one in which the woman is subjugated.

That's the average relationship in human history. Now what if we just study that? Would that be helpful?

No, it was when people like John Stuart Mill, who studied his relationships which was at the time extraordinary, realized the potential of what all relationships can be that he wrote his book on subjugation of women, one of the most important books of the 19th century that has led to the feminist movement and to the equality movement. What if he only studies the average? Would that help relationships? Not at all. How about teaching? What do you want to do in order to learn about teaching— go and

study the average teachers or go and study Marva Collins and then apply what Marva Collins does to all teachers? Everyone benefits when we focus on the tip of stamen— this is why Maslow said human nature and human potential has been sold short, when we only study the average. It's also about studying our personal best, not just other people's best, whether it's our personal best experiences because if we study our best experiences when we are at our happiest, when we are at our most successful, when we thrive the most within the relationship, we can learn from it and apply it to our future as well. When we study our average, we are describing our lives. When we are studying the best within ourselves, we are potentially prescribing. Maslow again: "Few in number though they be, we can learn a great deal about values from the direct study of these highly evolved, most mature, psychologically healthiest individuals, and from the study of the peak moments of average individuals, moments, in which they become transiently self-actualized."

If we learn from these experiences in ourselves, the question is no longer whether or not it's possible to experience it more and more in our lives. The question is "how is it possible to experience it". Alright. So we talked about changing ourselves, how it's possible the "growing-tip"

statistics which is the second significant idea within research in positive psychology: first significant idea is "let's study what works" the

second significant idea is "let's study what works best". But this is about individual change. How about societal change? I want to share with you at the end today a study, one of the most famous studies in the field called "the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study psychology". This was the study that was run, starting in the 1930s right here

between Harvard and MIT, were the best minds— psychological minds, philosophical minds, psychiatrists— got together and said, "let's create the Rolls-Royce—there wasn't a Rolls-Royce then— but best intervention program that we can think of." There was no limit in terms of how much money was put into it. As much as they

needed, they got and they chose 250 kids from an at-risk population. And the intervention is not a quick fix, overnight change, "we can" seminar-- five-year intervention. And here is what they got. Twice a month, case workers visited them, helped them deal with the conflicts in the family, helped them deal with issues in their

lives. Half of them had academic tutoring, those who needed it— got help, academic help. Psychiatric attention— all those who needed it, they were there. No limits on how much you needed it. Whatever you needed, you got from the best minds in the field. They joined the boy scouts, YMCA, other youth movements, benefited a great deal, supposedly from these experiences.

They got everything. This would be a dream treatment— not just in the 1930s, today as well. This is what psychologists dream about at night. Just introduce this. And then measuring outcomes was as serious as the program itself. There was a random assignment— there were 250 kids who got nothing, who were also studied, just like the kids who got the five-year intervention were studied— 250 kids in the control group. 40 years follow-up. This was not just about today, tomorrow for the

five years; they followed them through much of their lives. This was serious study. This was serious intervention. And the results were shocking. Even though all those who participated in this study— whether it was the mental health workers, whether it was the philosophers, psychologists, the professors and the psychiatrists— praise the

program as the best, as highly effective, when they looked at the raw objective data, the results were shocking.

Juvenile offenses: control group versus intervention group-- no difference. Over a third had official records and 20 more percent had unofficial records for misdemeanors. No difference in juvenile offenses. Adult offenses later on in their lives. Again, no difference. Over 20 percent offenses— whether against property or against person— in both groups: the 250 here versus 250 here, which is significant sample size. No difference whatsoever. other measures: physical health and mental health—no difference whatsoever. But finally, there was a significant difference on alcoholism, the number of people who became alcoholic later on in life as well as job status— how many people were able to

getting to do "the white collar" jobs. So at least there are results there. At least they found statistically significant results when they came to that. That's good, right? Not at all. Because these results were "in the wrong direction", meaning there were alcoholics in the intervention group than in the control group; there were more people in the control group making it at work "raising their status at work" than in the intervention group. In other words, intervention did more harm than good. Idealism, good intention, a lot of money wasn't practical. Now many people who look at this study— this is a seminal study—very few studies in the history of psychology that were that serious. They say, "Well, societal change is probably not possible". Give me one minute and I'll finish. Societal change is not possible, they say. Is it? First of all, there are exceptions and we have exceptions that prove the rule--there are programs that actually work, whether it's the work again of Karen Reivich and Martin Seligman from U Penn, "resilience program", whether it's

Marva Collins who's certainly an exception, who shows how interventions work. And it's interesting to think about the difference of what Marva Collins does, or she doesn't give the students in sense of entitlement, or she praises them but she gives them hard love as opposed to free lunch, or she doesn't label them as needy and the study

perhaps labeled these kids as needy. There are many differences. But the keys to study this exception and for practical idea is to come together and to say "what is working? Let's study the best; let's study what works and then apply it." Let's spread the word.

Let's do what Maslow talked about back in 1950s. What he suggested is "Manhattan-Project-type attacks upon what I consider to be the truly Big Problems of our time, not only for psychology but for all human beings with any sense of historical urgency". The Manhattan Project, when they created the atomic bomb and whether or not you agree with the Manhattan Project normatively. One second. I'm almost done. Positively, what they did there was bring together the best minds

Oppenheimer, Zillart, Fermi Feinman, Bore— bring them together with a mission of

saving the free world. Again whether you agree or not with the project is beside the point, it was the greatest, positively speaking, scientific project in history where the minds got together. This is what Maslow is suggesting that psychologists do. This is also the aim of positive psychology, no less than this. You get people around the world to think about these problems, these issues--practical idealists who will study what works, who will study the best and through that, make a difference.

I'll see you next week.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 4

Hi everybody. We are the Harvard Callbacks We have a special Valentine's Day message dedicated from the teaching staff to the students. <http://v.163.com>

I will never find another lover sweeter than you, sweeter than you I will never find another lover more precious than you, more precious than you Coz you are Close to me you're like my mother, Close to me you're like my father, Close to me you're like my sister, Close to me you're like my brother You are the only one my everything and for you this song I sing All my life I pray for someone like you I thank God that I, that I finally found you And I pray that you do love me too Pray that you do love me too Happy Valentine's Day!

Hi, morning. You know, when I asked them to dedicate this song, I had a slightly different song in mind. But-- so be it. We do love you. What we are going to talk about today, continuing from last time is or are the basic premises of this course-- where we are coming from, where we are going-- laying down in many ways, the foundation of the spiral that we are going to create for the next semester together. Last time we stopped, we talked about how difficult change is. We talked about the Twin studies that illustrate that what Lykken and Tellegen said-- maybe changing our happiness level is as difficult as-- and futile-- as trying to change our height. And we talked about the error of the average and the mistake that these researchers are making, misunderstanding the nature of change. Because if someone changes, the question is no longer "is it possible to change" but rather "how is it possible to change". And then we talked about the Somerville Cambridge study that show that literally the Rolls-Royce of interventions failed-- 5 years with the leading scientists, researchers, psychiatrists, psychologists from Cambridge, Harvard and MIT, putting their minds and hearts for good intentions to bring about change-- failure. Not only they have failed in bringing about positive change, they actually brought about negative change.

Remember?-- Alcoholism rates went up for the intervention group, compared to the control group. The control group that joined no intervention actually were more luckily to advance in their workplace 20, 30 years later. So change is difficult, but then we went over and said, "Well, Marva Collins creates change. So it is possible. Programs by Martin Seligman and Karen Reivich and numerous others succeeding in bringing about change". And the challenge then is, for us, if our goal is to become practical idealists is to understand what it is that brings about change and then do it. Spread the word. Spread the word about the research. Even if the research doesn't always communicate good news, it's about communicating what works, what is real, as opposed to our dreams, our desires, our hopes, our wishes-- that's not enough. Good will, idealism, good intentions are not enough. We need to be grounded in research. And this is very much what Maslow has in mind when he talked about the analogous Manhattan Project, where scientists, positive psychologists or that time psychologists, social scientists would get together and pick out the tip of the stem-- the few ideas, the few programs that work and then replicate them. Study the best and as one of the students here, Mariam -- came to me after the class and she said, "the tip of the stem is actually about democratizing excellence." I love that phrase.

Democratizing excellence-- studying the best and applying it to the rest of us. Ok, so we have this grand scheme, grand idea by Maslow to create a Manhattan-type Project. But what if I'm not interested in going into one of these projects? What if I'm not even interested in becoming an academic? Just want to do things on my own: Can I make a difference? And the answer is absolutely yes. One of the most significant barriers to people doing things in the world, to actually introducing change is that they underestimate their ability to bring about change. There is a lot of research in psychology. Primarily the people who started are Emerson and Moscovici and many others who have done research showing how minority-- very often one person can

history is a record of the power of minorities, and of minorities of one, "-- a lot to backed that up in social science research. Margaret Mead, the anthropologist: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." All change begins in the mind of single person or a small group." And then it expands. Now the question is "how does it expand" and "why is it so difficult for us to understand, accept, assimilate and live according to the fact that we can make a difference, if we understand that what we need to understand is how change happens. Change happens exponentially. Our connection to other people and their connection to others and so and so create an exponential function which explains for an example-- that those of you are familiar with-- "butterfly effect" how a butterfly flapping its wings in Singapore can theoretically cause a tornado in Florida. Because on particle hits another and another and another.

It also explains the phenomenal 6 degrees of separation: how we are all connected and interconnected in a web potentially of goodness. To illustrate the exponential nature of human networks, let's look at smiles. What do we know from research is that smiles are contagious. Someone smiles-- makes you smile. You smile-- you make someone smile. And so on and so on. You know, even some goes pass you on the street and you don't smile ostensibly you don't smile-- there are certain micro-muscles in your face that are moving that actually make you feel better. So smiles are contagious. Now if you smiled to-- or make three people smile, and these three people-- each one makes three other people smile. And those nine people make three-- each one-- three other people smile. Within 20 degrees of separation from you initial smile to the three people, the entire world will be smiling. Exponential nature of social networks. The same with making other people feel good-- complimenting people. If you make three people-- or even better, four people a

and so on and so on. Within very little time, the whole world will be made to feel better. This is the nature of an exponential function. So smiles and laughters are contagious. And to illustrate, I want to show you a quick video. (Spanish) (The sentence shown on the screen at the end, "Dificil, eh?" means "Difficult, isn't it?") Alright. I have to see this one more time.

Sorry. So the theme of the class today is babies. We are going to see another one soon. So let's

understand: what is the nature of exponential function so that we can understand the power of one? I'm looking for someone to make a deal with me. Here is the deal: What I am going to do is ask you-- this is all voluntary, you don't have to do it-- here's the deal. I am going to ask you to give me each day-- or rather I'm going to give you, whoever signs the deal with me, 1000 dollars every single day for the next 30 days. And what you will give me in return is on the first day, one cent-- one penny; on the second day, two cents; third day, 4 cents... Every day, twice as much as the previous day, starting with one. Who would like to make this deal with me? Again, every day I give you for the next 30 days 1000 dollars. What you'll do is every day for the next 30 days give me one cent, next day two, four, eight and so on.

Anyone? Any takers? One. Looking for some more. So that's 30000 down for me. Anymore? Ok, good. Alright. So here's the deal. Here is what will happen. On the 30th day, I will give you another 1000 dollars-- you'll have a total of 30000 dollars from me. On the 30th day, I will be getting from you in total, including the first 29 days-- no, rather on the 30th day, I'll be getting from you 5,368,709 dollars and 12 cents. Double that, times by two, this is the money I will be making in one month. One cent on the first, two on the second, and so on. For most people, it seems extraordinary because people don't understand the nature of exponential function and therefore don't understand the nature of the power of one. Here is another example.

imagination-- when I was a kid, my dad told me about the invention of the chess game-- some of you know the story. So the inventor of the chess game-- he was in India, and went to the local king. The king was very impressed with the game and said, "How can I reward you?" And the chess player said, "No, it's OK really." The king said, "No. I want to reward you. How can I reward you?" So the inventor of the chess game said, "Ok. What I like is on the first block, first square, I would like one grain of rice. On the second, I'd like two grains of rice. On the third, four grains of rice and so on and so on. That's my request." And the king said, "Are you sure that's all you want? I'm prepared to give you a lot. This is a wonderful game." And the inventor said, "Yes." So the king told his assistant to go and get the man, give the man his wish. When they started to calculate how much rice would be needed to fill up all blocks, all the way to 2 to the power 63. They realized that the rice could fill up the entire world with a thick layer. Again, misleading-- fail to understand it because we don't understand the nature of exponential change.

Another-- last one. So how many times do you think-- you all have a piece of paper in front you-- how many times do you think you need to roll over the piece of paper for the piece of paper to reach the moon? The moon, 240000 miles away from us. How many times do you need to fold the piece of paper so that you can reach the moon. 41 times. So if you can have a piece of paper here, and you fold it 41 times by the end of the class, you can reach the moon. I don't know why they make such a big deal out of the person landing on the moon. Seems quite simple to me. And here is the point. We underestimate our capacity to affect change. Because we underestimate the growth of exponential function. We are influencing people and the world every minute of our lives. The question though is in which direction are we going to do it. Are we going to be a force for change? Be deliberate? Be practical idealists? Or just have the good

intentions without the effort that's necessary to bring about a positive exponential function. The final project for this course, as you know is a presentation

that you'll give whether it's for the (?) students or the extension school students. You'll be giving a lecture to other people. And when we put together the class, this is precisely what we thought about: how you affect change and those people whom you change will hopefully influence others and so on and so on. In many ways, the idea was taken from the film "Pay it Forward". What I want to do now is show you a quick excerpt-- just the coming soon of "Pay it Forward", for those of you who haven't seen it. Because in "Pay it Forward", they capture this very idea of human networks as exponential functions. We underestimate our capacity to effect change because we underestimate the growth of an exponential function What if the world is just a big disappointment? Unless you take the things that you don't like about this world and you flip them upside down and you can start that today.

That's me. And that's three people. And I'm going to help them. And they do it for three other people. And they do it for three more. It has to be something really big. Something they can do by themselves. is it possible let one idea to change the world Lost your car? That's a keen observation. I can help you. You are giving me a brand new Jaguar and you don't want anything. Call it generosity between two strangers. What did you tell my son to make him bring homeless man into my house? I've got a story, Ok? A senior partner of Chandling and Moss is giving away new cars? Just pay it forward. Three big favors for three other people. You can't just put two people together and make them like each other. It's the one. Pay it forward. Pay it forward. Just like the idea. You could fix a person. Do you want to come in and stay? - It's just complicated. - Come in. Supposed to be something hard. I don't care about your burns, Eugene, if that's even what they are. Is that what they are? I can't. So sorry. Don't tell me how sorry you are for me. Maybe you are scared to get rejected; well, I can't reject you, you're too quick for me! Are you still going to pay it forward? Give her another chance for me. You will miss! I wanna wear the (?) dress. No, you smell good! - Are you sure?

- Yeah, yeah! Pay it forward is a movement in LA, Mrs. McKenney. Come on!

- A movement? So you are like flunk us if we don't change the world? You might just scrape by with a C. Impact three people. Each impact three others and three others. Within 20 degrees of separation. You can change the world, the entire world. Premise number 3: . internal factors versus external factors. There is a lot of research showing how difficult it is to change happiness based on external factors. Research on subjective wellbeing-- the term that psychologists use to capture happiness essentially has been going on for very, very long time. Until recently, most of the research was conducted, was done using questionnaires. And many people rightfully so questioned the veracity, the value of these questionnaires, because it is subjective-- are we measuring something real? Over the last few years, what started to happen is more and more psychologists have been using brain scans for example; they've been using fMRIs, EEGs, other physiological measures. And what they found interestingly is that there is a very high correlation between the "objective" measures such as brain scans, such as EEGs, such as fMRI, such as physiological measures and people's evaluation of their wellbeing-- in other words, subjective levels of

happiness. Very high correlation between the two which in many ways gives credence to the many years of research that has been conducted, before we have the technology to do it in a more sophisticated way. So the research I am going to share with you-- some of it is taken using the brain scans, other is self-evaluation. But again, both are meaningful as well as valuable.

We'll get more into the way that the research is conducted when we talk about phenomenon such as meditation. Or people like Richie Davidson actually scanned the brain and showed significant changes as a result of an 8-week meditation program. Or

that we have morality centers in our brain. So it's becoming much more sophisticated, much more interesting and the interesting thing about it is that it verifies a lot of the research that has been done to date with far less sophisticated means, such as self-report. Research done by Daniel Gilbert who teaches Psych1 on effective forecasting.

Here is one of his studies. So what he did was go to professors who were just before either getting the tenure decision: so either they were going to get the tenure or not. And he asked them, "How happy are you going to be, if you get the tenure?" And they said, "Ecstatic! This is something I've working on for many years and this will be it. This will be a dream come true." And-- "How happy are you going to stay for?" And they said, "For the rest of our lives. Because this is something we've been working for very long time. It will make everything so much easier. I can get off the publish-or-perish race. I can enjoy my work much more. This is going to transform my life." And he asked them, "What happens if you don't get tenure? If you are rejected?" And they said, "We are going to be devastated. This is something we've been working for many, many years." And-- "How long are you going to be devastated for?" "Probably until we get tenure somewhere else. But even then, that may not be enough."-- Because once you don't get tenure in one place, you don't go up in terms of the ranking of the school-- you very often would get tenure but elsewhere, school that is not considered as good as the one where you were rejected. So it will be devastating for a very long time. And Gilbert went to them at the moment when they got the tenure decision. Some of them got them. Others did not. "How are you feeling?" He asked. Those who got it, "Ecstatic! Happiest we've ever been." And-- "How long are you going to stay happy for?" "For the rest of our lives. We've made it." And then he went to those who didn't get tenure and asked them, "How are you feeling?" They were devastated. And they were sure that they were going to remain devastated for a very long time.

And he went back to see them three months later, six months later. And what Gilbert and his colleagues found was that almost to the person, those who got tenure or did not get tenure went back to their previous level of wellbeing: If they were happy before, they were happy six months hence; if they were unhappy before, regardless whether they get tenure or not, they were not happy. In other words, it looks like this and went back to base level or; it looks like this and back to base level. They did the same with lottery winners. "What if you really win ten million dollars, will it actually make you happier?" Yes-- for a while, but not for long. Philip

Brickman, Northwestern University did this research.

After within 6 months, people go back to their base level of wellbeing. People in serious accidents with their paralysis as the result of the accident, very often, usually-- again, this is all the average-- go back to their base level of happiness: if they are happy before, they will be happy one year after; if they are unhappy, they will remain unhappy. Extreme circumstances make very little difference to our wellbeing. University of Illinois professor Ed Diener does a lot of research on happiness levels. He has been doing it since the 1970s. What he shows-- he and others including Daniel Kahneman, Nobel prize winner-- show is that wealth matters very little to our levels of wellbeing. Just like the lottery would make a very little difference to our wellbeing. Now this does not mean that a person who doesn't have enough food, someone who is homeless on the streets here, gets an extra thousand or two thousand dollars a month-- that of course will make him or her much happier. But beyond the basic needs, once our basic needs are met and that means food, shelter, basic education. Once those needs are met, income makes very little difference. No change across generations. Our generation is much wealthier than our parents, much, much wealthier than our grandparents' generation. We are not happier. And that is global

whether it's China, whether it's in the UK or Australia, or the United States.

Levels of happiness are essentially static; and anxiety levels and depression levels, as we talked about in the first class have gone up significantly. So income levels make very little difference. In general, external circumstances make very little difference. I mean, think about your own experience: how did you feel-- go back, just transport yourself to experience of getting into Harvard, getting this big package in the mail which said "You were accepted" on April 1 or the end of December, when you got this pack-- how did you feel? Probably ecstatic. Probably one of your highlights. And that moment, if you are like me, you thought, "This is it. I'm really going to be happy for a very long time. Cos I really struggled in high school-- a lot of it was difficult; a lot of it was painful, but it was all worth it. I made it." And you went along with that feeling the next day, because in school they started to talk about how you got in. And you felt fantastic about it, right? And you felt great probably for the rest of the senior year-- I mean, still ups and downs; but overall, high levels of happiness. And it was going to last for the rest of your life. And you came here-- Freshmen week, you knew it was going to last for the rest of your life. Because you were around wonderful people. It was fun. There were parties. And you said, "Everything they said about Harvard was not true. It's actually a party school." You were certain of that, right? And not only was it a party school, you were going to have an amazing time for the four years and beyond. Because your life was transformed by this letter of acceptance, right? Things started to change probably on the first day of class, but not entirely-- because there's shopping period and it's such a wonderful thing-- you shop for classes. It's even better than going to the mall-- so many, 3000 classes to choose from. And this second week of Harvard is fantastic and it was going to continue just that way, constant tide for the rest of your life. And then suddenly things begin to change. Slightly. Ever so slightly. And they completely change once your first paper is due or the midterms

arrive. And you go back to your base level of wellbeing.

If you experience a lot of stress in high school and elementary school and were

unhappy, generally the best predictor would say that you would feel the same way a month into your Harvard experience. External circumstances matter very little. Very little. In fact, also, place of residents makes very little difference. People think, " Well, if I move-- especially in the day-light-- if I move to California, I'll be happier, right?" Wrong. Californians are no happier than people in Massachusetts. Initially when we go to a warm place, we feel the relief and there's this spiky level of wellbeing. But very quickly we go back to our base level exactly where we were before. I'll take this even a step further, even though there is no research about this, I bet you this is correct: there is no difference in our levels of wellbeing if our place of residents is by the river or in the (?). This is really taking the theory far, but it's true. I love this T-shirt-- what? If you can't run with the big dogs, stay in yard. Anyone from Korea here? Alright. You made it all the way on such a cold day. Well done! I appreciated it. How spoiled we get here. Makes very little difference. Very little difference-- where we are, where we live, income levels, lottery, tenure, getting into our dream college, getting our dream job for you seniors-- you may have just gotten it. Yeah, you are going to have a spike in your level of wellbeing-- I'm sure you had a spike in your level of wellbeing when you got this acceptance letter, but very quickly we go back to our base level. One thing that does matter to our base level of wellbeing which is external circumstance is democracy versus oppression. People living in democracies are generally significantly happier than people living in dictatorships.

Women, for example, living in places where they are oppressed are in general less happy than women living in free countries. People living in Darfur are certainly less happy than people living in Denmark or the United States. But again, these are the extreme circumstance that do make a difference, such as I said, a homeless person, of course, income will make a difference to that person. Moving to a free country, of course, will make a difference to their wellbeing. But beyond the extremes, additions or subtractions to our external circumstances make very little difference. Now this is

good news and bad news. The bad news is it seems like whatever we do, it doesn't matter. So why am I working hard in order to get that BCG job? why did I work so hard in order to get into this place?

If it doesn't matter, if I experience this ups and downs. And the answer is that-- yes it won't make a difference to our wellbeing but it also doesn't mean that we cannot increase our level of wellbeing. Many people said the problem with general levels of happiness or unhappiness rather, the cause is people have too high expectations. And if we lower our expectations, we lower our stress levels and we will enjoy life more. "Ok, so I don't care if I don't get a B in the course. I'd be much happier if I don't care, if I lower my levels of expectation. I don't care what I get into, what job I

have, I just want to be happy." And you'll probably be happy. Slightly happy if you lower your levels of expectations, but not in the long term. And we'll talk about it next week. Not in the long term. The problem is not lower these high expectations-- that doesn't matter. The problem is right versus wrong expectations. Not lower high expectations-- that won't make a difference to our levels of wellbeing. What will make a difference to our levels of wellbeing is if we have right vs. wrong expectations. It is wrong expectation to expect that getting into a certain place, getting a raise, finding our dream partner, is responsible for our happiness. Moving to California or to (Forts Heimer?). That in and of itself will not make us happier. That's wrong expectation. The right expectation is to believe in change from within. So these things will not make us happy. In fact, our readiness and potential to experience happiness is mostly depended on our state of mind, not on our status, or the states of our bank account.

It's about changing our perception-- state of mind. It's about changing our interpretation of the world, of what's happening to us, of our achievements, of our failures. It's about what we choose to perceive, what we choose to focus on. It's about transformation, as opposed to the external information or the external success. 1504--

this whole course, is about this transformation, as I mentioned during the first lesson. I want to move on to the fourth premise, one of the most important premises in this course. And in many ways, we can understand human intellectual history just based on this idea: should we accept human nature? Or can we perfect it? And can it change? This work relies on-- or these ideas rely on the work of Thomas Sowell. Thomas Sowell, Harvard class of 58, now at Stanford, the Hoover Institute, one of my intellectual heroes. And what he does and what his work does is basically explain why people choose to back one political party versus the other; why they choose to live one kind of life versus the other. This single book helped me understand myself better as well as other people better-- whether it's politically, whether it's psychologically, whether it's philosophically. Those of you who are interested in politics and there is one book you want to read, after you read Marva Collins of course, it's this. So what does Thomas Sowell say?

Essentially what he does is divide people into two camps those who hold constrained vision, the limited vision; and those who hold the unconstrained, the unlimited vision of human nature. People who hold constrained vision of human nature, believe that human nature cannot be changed; it's immutable-- we have certain instincts, we have certain inclinations. They are fixed. This is it. What you see is what you get. What you are born with or were born with, as species, is all we have. The flaws that are out there are inevitable-- they cannot be changed. We need to accept them for what they are. That's the only thing we can do with these flaws. And people who have the constrained vision think that our instincts, our inclinations, our basic nature is immutable, accepted. And then what they do, rather than resign, they channel it. How do they channel it? By building certain political institutions that would channel the flawed, imperfect human nature toward the good. Philosophers and psychologists who fall under the constrained vision create them, philosophies and psychology and institutions and systems to channel our flawed and imperfect nature.

People who fall under the constrained vision in the history of ideas, are people such as Alexander Hamilton, Adam Smith-- those of you are taking or will take EC

10, ?, Fredrick Kayak. These are people who say, "our nature is constrained. It's limited." Edmund Burke-- another one. What captures this idea best-- the words of Francis Bacon, considered the father of the scientific movement, was a philosopher in

1600s: "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed." Whether it's physical nature, or human nature. We need to obey it. It is what it is. Now we have the unconstrained vision. Perhaps you are a little bit more optimistic, a little bit more utopian-- human nature can be improved. It can be changed. It is up to us to do so. It is perfectable. We don't need to accept these flaws as inevitable. We can perfect it. There are solutions to these flaws, to these imperfections and our role-- the goal of institutions, whether it's political institutions, educational institutions, of systems, organizations, individual philosophers, psychologists, the role is to change our nature, to perfect it, to better it. Philosophers who help this position: people like Thomas Jefferson, people like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, George Bernard Shaw, Ronald Dworkin and other leading thinkers.

And what Thomas Sowell did was map the entire intellectual history of world showing how people who held this view versus that view, that two radically different political prescriptions. The person who best captures the unconstrained view, Benjamin Constant, French philosopher and politician, "It is for self-perfectioning that destiny calls us." Generally people on constrained view, are people politically, not always, but usually people who would support capitalism-- people like Adam Smith, who talked about "invisible hand"-- Let's channel imperfect, perhaps flawed human nature toward the good. People who are more on the unconstrained vision would tend toward Utopianism or sometimes communism. Not always, but sometimes. Why? Because let's change human nature. Self-interest is not good. It hurts in the long term and therefore, we need to change it rather than the constrained vision-- people who

said, "We may not like it, but it is what it is. We cannot change it. Let's make the best of it and channel it toward the good." Two radical views. Two radical prescriptions based on people's notion perspective. So why am I telling you this? This is not a political science class. Because it has every relevance to psychology as well. It has every relevance to psychology: Do we perceive reality, human nature as constrained or unconstrained will ultimately affect our psychology. And this is very meaningful and important.

Let me explain. Now first of all, some people who have the constrained view when it comes to politics, have the unconstrained view when it comes to psychology, so it is not always consistent, though it very often is. So the vision of psychology this course promotes is the constrained view. In other words, my belief-- and I am going to back that up with research today and for the next semester-- is human nature is fixed. We have inclinations. We have certain instincts that are there and have been formed either God-given or evolutionary-given for millions of years that have been formed. They are not going to change any time soon. Not in our life time. It's fixed. We are stuck with them through good and ill. And all we can do after we accept this nature is to first understand

it through research, and then after we understand it, make the best use of it. Understand it through research as well as through the search-- through introspection, and then make the best use of it. How can I channel my nature?

And what I want to do now is illustrate a case study of what I mean by nature constrained and why it is so important for happiness, for wellbeing, for long-term success to have the constrained view of human nature when it comes to our psychology that is. The topic I want to talk about is the permission to be human. I am going to talk about this topic for three reasons. A, because it illustrates what Thomas Sowell means politically in the psychological realm. Second, because I think it is one of the most important pillars of wellbeing and happiness. The third reason why I want

to talk about it is because it gets to misunderstanding that many people have regarding what positive psychology is and is not. When I first started teaching this course and had six students, I remember one day sitting in Leverett House, having lunch by myself and one of the students comes in and says, "can I join you?" "Sure." we have lunch. And he says to me, "Tal, I hear you teaching a class on happiness." And I said to him, "Yes. That's right." And he said, "You know, my roommates are taking your class." And I said, "That's wonderful." There were two of the six. And he said, "But Tal, you've got to watch out now." And I said to him, "Why?" And he said, "Tal, you'll have to be careful." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Because if I see you unhappy, I'll tell them." The next day in class, I used that and I said to the students, "You know, the last thing in the world that I want you to think is that I experience a constant high or that you, by the end of the semester or the year-- it was a year course, you-- by the end of the year-- will experience a constant high."

There are two kinds of people, who experience this constant high, who don't experience painful emotions such as anger, or envy, or disappointment, or sadness, or unhappiness, or depression, or anxiety at times-- two kinds of people who don't experience these painful emotions: the one kind are the psychopaths-- by definition they don't experience these painful emotions; the second kind of people who don't experience these painful emotions are dead people. Exactly! So you know, if you experience these emotions, it's a good sign. You are not a psychopath, and you are alive. However, in our culture today, we don't give ourselves the permission to be human, the freedom to experience these painful emotions as well. And we pay a very high price for this inability, for this refusal to accept the fact that it is part of human nature that is constrained, that is there no matter what. As kids, as babies-- going back to the baby's scene, we give ourselves the permission to be human, we know that it's natural. We don't even think about it in fact, to experience the high and then the low and high and then low. And later on, when we stop giving ourselves the permission to

be human when the (?) become so important, we begin to realize that other people are watching us and evaluating us constantly and we think they do so much more than they actually do. That's when we stop giving ourselves the permission to be human, and we pay a price, in terms of our energy levels, of our wellbeing, of our happiness, of our creativity, and ultimately also our success.

Let me give an example of someone who does give himself the permission to be human. The Permission to be Human Now I'm saying we should look like this.

But what I am saying is that we all need a space, a place in our own lives where we give ourselves the permission to be human, whether it's with close friends, people we care about, whether it's first and foremost with ourselves when we write a journal, where we do give ourselves the permission to be, to cry, to be joyous-- because if we don't, we pay a price. We need a space of unconditional acceptance. The best advice that I got, or that we got-- my wife and I got when David, our first son was born from our pediatrician, Dr. Tok Shapiro-- and David was born at 1 AM in the morning and around 8 AM in the morning, he came in to see, to check up on my wife, to check up on the baby, for some reason, he didn't check up on me. And everything was fine. As he is leaving the room, he turned around and said, " Just one more thing. over the next few months, you are going to be experiencing every single kind of emotion to the extreme and that's fine. It's natural. We all go through it." And he walked out. It was the best advice that my wife and I got regarding child-rearing. Why?

Let me give you an example. So after about a month, I started to, once in a while, experience some envy toward David. Because here he was for the first time in-- well, since my wife and I were together-- someone else is getting much more attention than I was, no matter how much I cried. And I felt envy toward him and five minutes later, I experienced this most intense love toward him-- the emotion that I haven't felt before. Now normally I would think, "what a hypocrite! It's just something is wrong:

one minute you are envious and the next minute you experience love?" There is nothing wrong. There is everything right. It's part of being human. And because I had Dr.Shapiro's voice at back of my mind-- permission to be human, that helped me a great deal-- experience the envy when I experienced it, accept it; and then enjoy and celebrate it-- the positive emotions that I experienced toward David. Permission to be human. You see, there is actually a paradox playing-- this is work done by our very own Daniel Wegner on ironic processing. When we suppress a natural phenomenon, that phenomenon only strengthens.

Let me illustrate through an experiment. So for the next ten seconds, do not think of a pink elephant. For the next ten seconds, do not think of a pink elephant. You know the one that I am talking about? With the big ears, Dumbo? Do not think of a pink elephant for the next three seconds and I am sure no one thought of a pink elephant right? What happened? -- Most people thought of a pink elephant. Because when we try to suppress a natural phenomenon such as having a visual of the word when we say it, that thing just intensifies. The same applies to the painful emotions that are natural. And when we try to suppress them, they strengthen. When I started to teach after hearing about Marva Collins and deciding teaching is my calling, I knew that I had to deal with the problem-- the problem is that I am introvert, I get very nervous in front of audiences and large audiences for me is anything but five. But I had to deal with it and I knew I would have

to deal with it. So I would go on in front of audience and before that I would say to myself, "Tal, don't be nervous. Don't be anxious. No anxiety today. Don't be nervous. Don't be nervous. Don't!" And what happened?-- Pink elephants all around. Instead after especially reading about paradoxical intentions by Victor Frankl, I started to give myself the permission to be human. And now when I go into a lecture, the nervousness-- because I give myself the permission to be human-- goes away within as little as three hours into the lecture. But no, it's manageable. I still get nervous before every single lecture, which is actually

a good thing. But it's manageable. I can deal with it. I can handle it. Permission to be human.

You see, rejecting our nature leads to suboptimal performance emotionally as well as in terms of external performance. Imagine waking up every morning and saying to yourself: "I refuse to accept the law of gravity. This law of gravity is such a pain. You need to walk down the stairs and then up the stairs. I just want to float to Sanders (Sanders Theatre) in the morning. I just want to float to the dining hall after-- so much easier, so much less painful." Imagine leading a life like this. Will you truly refuse to accept the law of gravity? What kind of life would you lead? Well, first of all, you may not survive for long, if you truly don't accept the fact that things, people being no exception fall when left in mid-air. But even if you do survive-- let's the ground floor-- even if you do survive, you would lead a life of constant frustration-- refusing to accept something that is there whether you like it or not.

So instead we accept the law of gravity. More than that, we create games around the law of gravity. I mean all those of you doing sports here-- and it's most of you in this room who are doing athletics, who go for a run, you rely on the law of gravity. Can you imagine Harvard vs. Yale football without the law of gravity? Can you imagine a basketball game without the law of gravity? I am not talking about Michael Jordan, but for the (?). We accept it and we create games around it. And yet we don't do the same when it comes to our emotions. Now here is the key point: Painful emotions are as much a part of human nature as the law of gravity is part of physical nature. And "nature to be commanded must be obeyed". And the aeronautics engineer who wants to build an airplane has to obey, take into consideration, learn it, study and understand the law of gravity. The same applies to a psychologist. The constrained view of human nature. "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed." And yet we don't do that. We don't do in our culture. And we pay a high price for it. We

have what I called, "the great deception". We are people who ask, "So how are you doing?" And we say, "Fine. Just great." Well in fact, we are not doing so well. More appropriate would be "I'm going through a rough patch now. I'm going through a hard time. I'm really stressed." But yet, we don't want to admit that. We don't give ourselves the permission to be human, because we think there is something wrong with us if we experience these emotions. And then when everyone says, "Oh fine. Oh great. Oh terrific", then we are asked "How are you doing?" I am not going to be the only party poop here. I am not going to be the only depressed one around here. So I said, "Oh fine. Oh great." And then we contribute to this great deception and it is

this great deception that leads to the great depression-- the great depression in the ultimate currency of happiness. This, to great extent, explains why so many people today experience depression the 45% figure, nationwide on college campuses.

Not enough permission to be human. I am not talking about wearing our heart on our sleeves. When someone comes to us in the elevator in William James (William James Hall), I says, "How are you doing?" "Thank you for asking. You know it all started when I was three." This is not what I am talking about. In William James, maybe the case-- because the elevator-- it does take two hours to get there for the door to close. But other than that. I'm not talking about. what I'm talking about is a space, a safe space in our lives with our closest friends, with our family, first and foremost, with ourselves, will we have the permission to be human. And what I'm not talking about is resignation. Far from it. It's not about saying, "Well I'm depressed. There's nothing I can do about it. I accept my nature. I accept my state. And that's it." I'm not talking about resignation. what I'm talking about is active acceptance. What does that mean? It means understanding that certain things I cannot change and certain things I can and ought to change. One of the main ideas we'll talk about is the distinction: we'll talk about specifically on the lecture on change between affect, behaviors and cognitions. The A, B, C of psychology. Affect-- emotion. Behavior-- action.

Cognition-- thoughts. Unconditional acceptance, permission to be human relates primarily to our affect, to our emotions. They are there, just like the law of gravity is there. That does not mean we need to accept our behavior and our cognition.

For example, I can-- and having the past experience-- envy towards my best friend, that in and of itself does not make me a bad person. It's human. I've never met a person who has never experienced or does not experience-- well, maybe the Dalai Lama-- but other than that, who does not experience envy toward other people. And if it is true about the Dalai Lama, that is because he's worked on it for decades. Envy is part of human nature-- nothing good or bad about the envy.

Nothing good or bad about experiencing the anger. Nothing good or bad about experiencing the depression or anxiety. It's part of human nature. However, the question is, how do I choose to behave, to act as a result of it? That is where the moral domain enters. That's where I can have moral or immoral behavior toward my best friend or baby, or other people in general. I can still experience envy toward my best friend and choose to behave generously and benevolently toward him. The same with cognition and we will talk a lot about it when we talk about CBT-- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. I can feel it certain way. But it doesn't mean that I need to resign to my thoughts about that feeling. Rumination is one of the things that we'll talk about a lot actually not that helpful-- to ruminate about painful emotions. It's much helpful to write about them. To talk to other people about them, rather than just be thinking constantly about how miserable I am because my girlfriend just left. I haven't found anyone in Pinocchio's. So rumination doesn't help. So I don't necessarily accept all my irrational thoughts and again, we'll talk about it much more next

week of how we can cognitively reframe what we were thinking. But the emotion-- that affect is the emotion, it is what it is. And the key is to be true to reality, which is also one of the main themes in the course. In many ways, this course should not be called "Positive

Psychology". But I am telling you this after you already signed up for the class so it is too late to leave. This is actually not a course on positive psychology. It's a course in reality psychology.

Because positive psychology may mean that we are only focusing on the positive and what works, ignoring all the rest that are not. Overdoing this class is shifting the pendulum. So there is more even playing field instead of the 21:1 ratio, we are doing much more, focusing on the positive. And at the same time, accepting the painful emotions are as much part of human nature as the wonderful emotions. And sooner we accept it, the better. That won't mean at the end of the course of 1504 or 100 or

100 other courses in the workshop and sold the books that you read, it's not that you will not have painful emotions anymore. It's simply your psychological immune system will become stronger, hopefully already by the end of this semester. Psychological immune system will become stronger. And that means not that we don't get ill. It means we get ill less often and when we do get sick, we'll recover more promptly. The difference between the extremely happy people and extremely unhappy people is not that one gets sad, of upset, or anxious, or depressed; and the other does not. Both groups do. It's how quickly, how promptly we can recover from these painful emotions-- in other words, how strong our psychological immune system is. And our psychological immune system strengthens when we give ourselves the permission to be human. Many of you've probably read this, come across this, but I think this captures so well the foundation of what it means to be actively accepting. This has become the official mantra in many ways of the AA movement: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can change; and wisdom to know the difference." The wisdom to know the difference-- fortunately, a lot of this wisdom can come from studies, from research, from deep introspection that you will do throughout the semester.

What I want to do now is an exercise. I want to do a group meditation. Trying to understand, not just on the cognitive level of the research, but also to experience on the visceral emotional level, what it really means to give ourselves the permission to be human. Those of you who don't feel comfortable doing it, you don't have to do it. Those who feel comfortable to do it, do it. If it's a stretch for you, I still recommend that you do it. If you never meditate before, this is a wonderful opportunity to do it for the first time. One thing I do ask you: If you are not doing it, if you don't participate, simply just keep quiet. Other than that, I really do recommend that you join us. What I want to do together now is enter the realm of unconditional acceptance. So, or, just sit up straight as much as possible.

If possible, your back relaxing against the back rest. Plant your feet comfortably on the floor. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes. Shift the focus of your breath. Shift the focus of your thoughts to your breathing. Take a deep breath in all the way down to your

belly. And then breathe out. Again, deep breath in; slow, gentle, quiet breath out. Repeat that in silence. If your mind wanders, simply bring it back to your breathing. Deep, slow inhalation. Deep, slow, gentle, quiet exhalation. Most of us don't breathe deeply enough. We don't take the time to celebrate our breath, our spirit, our being. The connection, the link, the bridge between our mind and our body; between our emotions and our thoughts; between the brain and the heart. Continue with the deep breathing. As you continue with the deep breath, shift your focus to your emotions, to your feelings. How are you doing? How are you feeling? Take attention to your emotions. Whatever they are, whatever it is that your feeling, allow it to float through you.

Naturally. Just experience your emotion whatever it is. You may feel one emotion at one moment, different emotion the next. That's Ok. Whatever it is, accept it. Experience it. Give yourself the permission to be human. It's all OK. Just breath.

Continue to observe and experience whatever emotion comes up, whether it's calm or happiness, whether it's anxiety, confusion, boredom or joy. Whatever it is, continue to breathe deeply into your belly. And gently, slowly, quietly exhale. Let the emotion flow just like the breath. As you continue breathing deeply, in your mind's eye, see yourself walking out of this classroom today, walking in the yard, with the feeling that all your feelings are real fine part of human nature. They just are. Neither good nor bad. As you walk amid the buildings and trees, as you see your friends and classmates, allow these emotions to float through you, freely, lightly. By experiencing these emotions, whether the ups and the downs, what you are doing is being, being a human being. Continue to allow the breath and the emotions to just flow. To just be. What if you truly gave yourself the permission to be human? What if you are giving yourself the permission to be human? Just imagine. Life becomes so much lighter. So much simpler. When, rather than trying to fight or defeat our nature, we accept it. We accept who we are. We accept whatever emotion comes up. Deep, slow inhalation. Slow, gentle, quiet, calm exhalation. Take a few deep breaths in silence. Embrace the silence, the stillness. Embrace yourself, your emotions. And on your next exhalation-- deep, slow, quiet exhalation, open your eyes. If the person next to you is asleep, gently wake him or her up. Just imagine Just imagine the kind of life that you can experience

-- hush-- the kind of life you can lead, if you truly, genuinely, really gave yourself the permission to be human. It's one of the pillars of healthy life, psychologically, physiologically. So try it. Everyday remind yourself just once or twice to give yourself the permission to be human. And give others that same permission. You deserve it.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 5

I'd like to introduce a representative from "Teach for America" which is an organization that has done and is doing a lot of good, promoting goodness in the world and I'd like to-- in 1504, we've been supporting them for the last 2 years and we'd like to continue to do that. So please.

Hello. Can you hear me? Thank you so much for this. I will take 90 seconds. My name is Josh Bieber. Alright. I feel positive. I was a Teacher for America Corp member and I now work for TFA. I do new site development. So when I was a senior, I had marginally considered this is an option. I had a napping for a very pushy phone call from a very pushy TFA recruiter on the deadline day-- I would not apply. But I hesitantly took two hours to fill that essays and now owe her for or owe that phone call for the best two years of my life and truly the happiest.

So if I have 60 seconds, there are just two things that I want people to know about TFA. I think you know what we are. One, is that this country does not serve all kids in our schools fairly. So low-income kids before they even leave elementary school are years behind where they should be. And nearly not even a half of them graduate high school, which is like, a terrible injustice, a complete injustice. Two, you can actually make a difference. I was as skeptical as they come about TFA and my ability and all the rest. But I know this to be true. If you walk into a class with 5th graders, who on day one are years behind where they should be and hate school and are kind of like to hate you because of it. And nine months later, they leave honor above great level, begging for some more work and wanting to hang out with you on the weekend. You kinda think that anything is possible. And that's clearly I am here now. So for me, Teach for America is an opportunity to actually align my actions with my thoughts and my hopes and be part of the change we all talk about wanting to see. So I would encourage you all, regardless of what you think you may do next year, or you may go

beyond that to like, really consider this. It was the best thing that I could've done. The final deadline is tomorrow. It's easy to do. You don't need rex. Just apply. And give yourself the chance to fall in love with it the way that I did. And I will just end by saying, if you are in this room right now, you've probably had the best education anyone your age, anywhere could possibly have. Our students and our schools need you. So please join us. Thank you very much for the time. And have a good class.

Hi everyone. Quickly. If there are any extension students or undergraduate students who were not able to make section this week, we have an open section tonight at 730. That'll be videotaped for the extension school. So if you are available and interested in attending that, please come and see me after class. Thanks. I'd like to introduce now two very dear friends and supporters of positive psychology who are doing arguably more than anyone else to disseminate the ideas of positive psychology in a rigorous and fun way. I've asked them to give a brief presentation about the Masters of Applied Positive Psychology at U Penn, the only master degree, well the first master degree in the world-- there are a couple of others now. And they'll talk a little bit about-- for 15 minutes-- about the masters, before we jump into our material today, which hopefully will be exciting. So-- James and Debbie, please.

Thank you very much, Tal. It's great to be here with you guys. What a delight to be able to spend a

few minutes with you and such a very special class, where you are combining the science of positive psychology with its practice. And of course, as you very quickly figure out, Tal is such a master teacher, somebody who is able to take complex ideas and make them simple without making them simplistic and also making it inspiring and making the presentation motivating so that we want to go out and apply the ideas that we are studying. I'm curious-- how many of you here are interested in applying the science of positive psychology in your own personal life as part of why you are her. Can I see your hands? Ok. Great. How many of you are here

because you are also potentially interested in applying the science of positive psychology in your future career decisions, in your job eventually? Ok. Great. Excellent. I hope you do just that. For those of you who are interested in taking positive psychology, studies of positive psychology deeper at graduate level program for your own knowledge, but also to be able to take what you are learning into your profession, we're delighted to be able to tell you a little bit about the master of applied positive psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania, and to talk a little bit about taking positive psychology from the classroom to the world. Now as you know, positive psychology is just about 10 years old.

It was started in 1998, when Martin Seligman was the president of the American Psychological Association. And positive psychology was one of his presidential initiatives. About 4 years ago, Martin Seligman started the positive psychology center at the University of Pennsylvania. And the mission of the positive psychology center is to promote research, training, education and dissemination of positive psychology. So in January, 2005, I joined the positive psychology center as the director of education and senior scholar. The next month, in February of 2005, Debbie Swick came on board as the associate director of education. Our task was to create a master program and have an up and running by the fall. So again, I got there in January, Debbie came in February. We got our brochure out, printed and published in March. Our application deadline was April. Kind of an optimistic, I suppose? And we didn't know if anybody would show up. We didn't know if anybody would be interested. We needn't have worried. We got over 100 applications and we accepted 36 students into our program for that fall. And things have just been really going well and hopping ever since. This is our current class.

On their first day of class in the fall of 2007, we have 41 students in our class this year. So I'd just like to tell you a little bit more about the students. Actually three of

our graduates or current students are teaching fellows in this class. So that's exciting. Debbie Coen, Elizabeth Johnston-- where are you? You guys, please stand up. And Elizabeth Peterson. Great. If you look at the up left corner, Gabriel was a student here in this class two years ago, when we came and presented on the program and he is currently a student in the MAPP program. So there is a lot of synergy going back and forth between this class and our master program. Our student age range from 22 to 62. They come from all across United States, from Vermont to Florida, to California. They come from around the world: we have students from UK, from Norway,

Switzerland, India, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea and New Zealand. About 25% to 30% of our students are younger students who are just out of college and are looking to immerse themselves in positive psychology before going on into their professional training. The rest of our students are professionals who come from a wide variety of professions. In our first class, we had the former chief social worker inspector for the entire country of Scotland within the class. That was very interesting. We had kidney transplant surgeon, former Vice President of JP Morgan; we had attorneys, Directors of Development for Non-Profits; executive director of school, Carlbrook Academy is in our class this year; human resources directors, consultants, executive coaches, even professional musician and professional comedian. So it is quite a cross cut of students in the class.

Just in a couple of minutes, I want to give you a little bit more sense of what educational design is and just a brief over view of the course work. So this MAPP program is a one calendar year, full-time study. Students begin in September and August. The educational design is hybrid model--so once a month, students are on class, on site, for intensive on site classes. And then in the intervening periods, they are on distant learning modules that the students complete. This is a professional master degree. And it focuses on the theory and the application of positive psychology in various professional domains. So at this point, there is not a separate licensing or

credentialing in positive psychology itself. Students come from education, business, law, medicine, etc, bringing in their own credentials with them. So this design of having students on campus once a month for intensive classes allows students to continue working full time. Now just as I said, the program is full time and you may be wondering, "How can students work full time and study full time." Keep in mind this is a professional degree and executive education model that is intended to be designed for people who are themselves working full time and still taking classes full time. So most of our students continue their work they've been doing, continuing working full time when they come to our class. Another advantage of this model is students aren't required to live in Philadelphia. Students can commute in from across United States. And what has been a surprise and pleasure to us: students have decided to commute in from as far away as Europe and Asia. I don't know today what your commute was like to come to class. But some of our students come as far away as South Korea and New Zealand every month to be part of the positive psychology classes. So you can imagine that adds real excitement and energy to the class and puts a little bit pressure on the professors to make sure that we have something worth coming half way around the world for.

This enhances the educational experience obviously by increasing student diversity: we have students who are living abroad and coming in for the classes. And also we are able to tap into the expertise of professors, not just at the University of Pennsylvania, but also at other schools as well so that we can bring in the very top leading researchers and practitioners of positive psychology. A brief overview of the schedule of on-site classes on the fall 2008: you can see that there are five different intensive on-site weekends in the spring as well with distant learning and intervening times. So just very briefly, the courses-- each student takes four courses in the fall, four courses in the spring and then the capstone course. In the fall, the courses focus on the foundational

theory of positive psychology: Martin Seligman teaches the

Introduction to Positive Psychology course; Angela Duckworth teaches a course on Research Methods and Evaluation it is very important for our students to have a real good grasp of the science of positive psychology, understanding other research methods behind the results; I teach a course in the foundation of positive interventions; and then our fourth course is Approaches to the Good Life, where we have different leading researchers come in and talk about their research. In the spring, our courses focus, not so much on the theory, but now move to the application of positive psychology since it's a master of applied positive psychology. I don't know if you study yet "the character strengths and virtues", the values and the action classification by Chris Peterson. If you haven't done that yet, I'm sure you shortly will. He himself comes in and teaches a course on the work he has done. I teach a course on applied positive interventions and we have a service learning component as a part of that class. Karen Reivich and Judith Saltzberg Levick teach a course on positive psychology and individual-- so this is how to use positive psychology relationally with other people, whether it's in working environment or with friends or family.

And then finally, I don't know if you are familiar with appreciative inquiry-- again, I expect, if you not, Tal will be introducing it to you during the course this semester David Cooperrider is the leader of this field of inquiry, which basically takes positive psychology approaches into organizations and seeks to foster change at the level, not just individuals, but at the level of the whole. The final course the students take then is the Capstone project, which happens over the summer. This is an independent project where students are able to integrate what they've learned in their classes and take a step forward in the directions that they want to go in their own professional application of this. So we had students do research, quantitative research or qualitative research; we had students do literature reviews in a particular area of interest; work proposals for book they want to write; or workshop proposals and those kinds of things. So that's a brief overview of the courses. Debbie is going to just take a couple

of minutes to show you some pictures-- this has been a lot of texts in the last few minutes. Debbie will show you some pictures and tell you more about the class. Debbie. Thanks.

Thank you. You heard about the course from James. I'm going to tell you a little bit about how they are set up and what they are. And this is a picture from emersion week-- emersion week is when the very first time students meet together that for 5 days to Penn. And we have class from 8 to 5. And I know it sounds kind of crazy but we have a lot of fun as you can tell. And they stay engaged, because we bring faculties from all over the place and this world-class faculty-- they really have a chance to interact with these. The class is 41 students-- they take all the courses together and it's more a seminar than a lecture. So they really get to interact quite a bit. And during break, during lunchtime, etc, they get to see these people that just have come in from various places. Another more of interaction that you get in the MAPP program is with cohorts. Everyone is put in a cohort-- about 3 to 5 people. And you'll do different projects with these people; you'll

do a lot of things in distant learning; you'll communicate a lot with these people. And this is just another depth that you get when you get to work with people from all different places and all different demographics. And one of the things we really try to use the Capstone project for is a stepping stone into what you are going to do with your application. And many people have taken this and they have created workshop for what they are doing.

One person actually took the primer in positive psychology and she translated it into Japanese. And she's getting it published. And that is quite a project for her. And other people have published in scholarly journals their Capstone work. And people give presentations and this is a photo of someone giving a presentation in a positive psychology summit. So there are a lot of different things that students do as we bring them to the program, as we give them a solid foundation and then we help them start

applying this move towards that. But one of the biggest questions we get when we have applicants call in is, "what can I do with a MAPP degree?" I am going to tell you just as a quick snapshot: Sasha Lewis Heinz, just the first person there-- she is now in the PHD program in Development Psychology at Columbia University. So she came to the MAPP program before getting her PHD. So she has that foundation and that's what she wants to use and focus on as she goes through and gets her PHD. The second person up there is Saniel Mimen who has worked with hedge funds but she found in her spare time-- she found some time to create a positive psychology news daily website, which is articles about research and application of positive psychology written by MAPP alumni who are out there actually doing that. And another thing she's been able to do along with a lot of other MAPP alumni is being involved in trainings and being involved in projects that have come through the positive psychology center. As we get different projects to train people in the UK, to positive psychology in their schools, the people that we draw on are MAPP alumni, because they have the education and foundation that is needed to be able to put through these projects. So we hope to continue to put together alumni with various opportunities that come along to us.

Caroline Miller, the third person there-- she is an author and she is getting ready to publish her second book and she's also a speaker and a coach. And she's had the opportunities since MAPP to actually teach a lot of the courses and she's very focused on goal setting and she's very focused on sports psychology. So this has really expanded what she's been able to do. And not all of our students are Harvard graduates, but these three happened to be them. Harvard graduates. So it's very interesting to see that little snapshot. And we hope we have many more Harvard graduates coming to our program. So James, you wanna finish up here?

Thank you very much, Debbie. Our presentation is entitled "From the Classroom

to the World". And certainly the MAPP program is one way of taking positive psychology from the classroom to the world. Just want to mention very

briefly another opportunity: We've just started the international positive psychology association. And this is going to be a major international organization to help facilitate communication and collaboration among researchers and practitioners of positive psychology. Here is a picture that happened in October-- not pictured here is Tal, who is a member of the board of the directors as are a number of our other leading positive psychologists from United States and around the world. There's a special student membership so I encourage you to check out the international positive psychology association at www.ippanetwork.org and join to stay abreast of the latest development in the field of positive psychology. I wish we had time for your questions but I know Tal has a lot of great stuff for you today. So we will move along. Just want to let you know that there will be an information session this afternoon, from 3 to 4:30 in Harvard Hall, room 103. So we'd love to see any of those of you who are interested to stop by and talk with us and we'll be able to talking more detail about more specific questions you might have at that point. We'll also be here for a few minutes after class. We have some brochures with us. We'd love you to take a brochure if you are interested. There's always more information hat can be found on our website at pennpositivepsych.org or you can email us the address listed. So we hope to see a lot of you at the MAPP program sooner or later. In the meantime, wish you have a very successful semester as you dig into the science of positive psychology and put it into practice in your own lives, and think about how to take positive psychology from the classroom to the world.

OK. It's such a privilege to be a part of MAPP because what you have there in a year is all the top people from the field. So many of the people we'll talk about, whether it's Bob Fredrickson who we'll talk about in a few minutes, whether it's David Cooper we'll talk about, whether it's Martin Seligman of course, will come there and

present to you and you'll be spending quality time in small groups with them. Real privilege. So what I want to do today is finish up on the basic premises, on the final premise. Now we are going to watch it again. No? Or that?

Here we go. The final and the fifth premise is an important one; is a philosophical one but one I want to introduce at the beginning of the course so that you understand where I am coming from, where this course is coming from-- because many people say, "Ok, so happiness is important. We seek it; we have declarations-- national declarations, individual declarations of how important it is for us. But that doesn't mean that it is important or the "is", the fact that it is important doesn't mean we ought to do it. My argument here is that not only is it important, it also ought to be important. So first about the "is". Happiness, whether we like it or not, whether it's consciously , subconsciously, whether it's explicit or implicit, for most people-- not all, but for most people, it is the highest end. And again, we have Constitution save God in our pursuit of happiness. We spend a lot of effort, a lot of time thinking about it for ourselves as well as for others. Aristotle, over 2000 years ago, "Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence." William James\NWilliam James in 1890 or in "The Variety of Religious Experiences" writes, " If we were to ask the question: "What is human life's chief concern?" one of the answers

we should receive would be: "It is happiness." How to gain, how to keep, how to recover happiness, is in fact for most men at all times the secret motive of all they do, and all they are willing to endure." Now you may have heard of William James-- his name is after the building here. And he talked about this over 200 years ago; Aristotle over 2000 years ago. And it's not just peculiar to the West. The Dalai Lama, "Whether one believes in a religion or not, whether one believes in this religion or that religion, the very purpose of our life is happiness. The very motion of our life is towards happiness."

So it is important for people. Again, whether it's conscious, subconscious, explicit or implicit, the question though is in fact it is important, should it be important? What about the moral dimension of happiness? There are so many other things happening, so many important things to do in the world. Why should we have happiness as our highest end, as our chief concern, as that which determines the motion of our life? In other words, what's good about wellbeing? What's good about positive emotions? And there is a lot of research to answer this question. But before the research, it feels good to feel good. Think about it. Internalize it. This is Aristotle's Law of Identity: A is A-- it feels good to feel good. And that, in and of itself is justification: why not feel good, if we can feel good? So the burden to prove why happiness is not important may be on the people who would argue otherwise-- we will talk about that argument later. But the first key issue is that it's good in and of itself-- almost needs no justification. However, beyond just feeling good, happiness also contributes to our life, to our relationships. It contributes to other people. This is research done by Barbara Fredrickson, one of the faculty members who teaches at U PENN. You saw a picture of her up there. What Barbara Fredrickson says is that positive emotions have an evolutionary reason, that they have a purpose beyond just making us feel good. For example, they help us think beyond what we are thinking right now, broaden our thinking; they help us build relationships; they help us build capacities-- remember one of the key concepts of this course is the positive emotions, positive psychology as a field as a whole, is about building capacities. The two analogies we use was strengthening our immune system or stronger "psychological engine" that has the capacity to endure more not just from the negative to zero, but also from the zero to the positive. So this is Barbara Fredrickson.

Let me quote extensively from her article, which I believe you are reading for this week, "We should work to cultivate positive emotions in ourselves and in those around us, not just as end states in themselves, but also as a means to achieving

psychological growth and improved psychological and physical health over time. I call this the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions because positive emotions appear to broaden people's momentary thought action repertoire and build the enduring personal resources. Through experiences of positive emotions, people transform themselves, becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy individuals." Numerous benefits to just experiencing positive emotions. It's a win-win. It feels good. And it's good for us and it's good for society as a whole as I'll argue momentarily. So what she's talking about here, for example, is that positive emotions help us overcome negative emotions. What happens when we experience negative emotions is that our consciousness, our thinking narrows and constricts.

We focus just on one thing, so for example. And that can be a good thing-- you know, a lion comes to and charges me, "I don't want to start thinking about my MAPP application. I don't want to start thinking about what my roommates say. I want to focus on the lion. So my consciousness narrows and constricts, and I'm in the "fight or flight" mode. Now that's a good thing when a lion charges me. But it's not a very good thing if my consciousness continues to narrow and constrict beyond the threat, or beyond the hardship. And what we know is that very often we enter a downward spiral, a vicious cycle when we go into this narrow and constrict mode. So for example, just for example-- a random example: My girlfriend leaves me, alright? And I narrow and constrict in terms of my thinking-- all I am thinking about is just that. And what will happen is as a result, I experience sadness, because that is what I am thinking about, and sadness-- a painful emotion, not a positive emotion-- leads to further narrow and constrict. And that can potentially, not always, but potentially can go on and on and on. And that's when it can become depression. That's when I have difficulty getting out of this downward, vicious cycle. Positive emotions do the opposite. They broaden and build. Broaden and build leads to positive emotions. Then

positive emotions further broaden and build. So that's a virtuous cycle. And I look broadly, I look to other people, I look to other things: So what can I do now? Where can I go? Where can I spend my time? And very often what that does-- a positive emotion can take us out of this downward spiral and create an upward spiral. A positive emotion can come in form of watching a humorous film; it can come in form of "if you take a deep breath"-- we talked about deep breathing when we talked about my body; a positive emotion can come in form of interaction with a friend, a pleasant one. It's the positive emotion that can take us out from this downward spiral to this upward spiral. And again it doesn't always take a very long time.

And the challenge is to combine "the permission to be human" to experience the emotion to go through the emotion and yet not to enter the downward spiral where six months later, after small incident, I'm still in that rot. We'll talk about what is the right time and how do you find the right time, how do you find the balance between thinking about painful emotions and when does it slide to rumination, which is not always helpful. So it helps overcome the negative emotions. Also, creativity-- we think broadly-- we are able to make connections, see connections we haven't seen before, perhaps. There's a lot of the talk about the depressive creature. If you want to have high level of creativity, it's a must you have to be depressed. Well, it turns out that's not the case. Very often manic depressives are highly creative, but that's usually during their manic phases. In the depressed phase, our thinking is narrow; we don't think outside the box usually-- of course there's many exceptions, but as a whole.

In fact there's research-- for example, this was done with internists, doctors, who are giving a very difficult, very difficult question connected to a liver problem that an individual patient had. And they divided them randomly into three groups-- the first group was a control group-- they just had to solve the problem; the second group was given a statement about humanistic value of

medicine-- why is it so important to be a

medical doctor; and the third group was given candy and put in a funny playful good mood. The third group that was given the candies and put in a positive playful mood outperformed the other two groups significantly-- they thought about more options and they actually came up with better solutions with that problem. And this is one of many studies in this area. Another example-- children. One group of children was a control group; the second group was taught to think back to experience that make them laugh or smile. And that group did much better on the learning task than the control group, because they were put into a positive mood. Again, it's a win-win. It's defined in many ways that "no pain, to gain" paradigm, whether it's education of doctors or in school, as well as generally in the workplace. Because you see, also motivation and energy-- you don't need research for that, you know that when you are feeling good, you have more motivation, you have more energy.

of course, there is a lot of research to back that up. And ultimately success. They look in the professional people who are able to manage their emotions better and lead to positive emotions, get out of this narrow and constrict to the broaden and build are in the long term more successful. Again, it's not that people who don't have painful emotions-- remember? They are all dead. It's that people who experience painful emotions but are all in the same time able to shift themselves, their consciousness, their thinking, their experience to the positive more readily. And happier people are more successful, because they have more energy and work harder. It's because their pursuing something rather than running away from something-- it is called "approach rather than avoidance goals"-- we'll talk about that during the week on goals. Also because they form better relationships. They are more open and generous. And they are more creative. All these components ultimately lead to higher levels of success. Positive emotions not only contribute to our success, they don't just contribute to our feeling good, they also contribute to our wellbeing. Optimistic people, and again, not Pollyannaish detached optimism, but grounded optimists, on average, live

significantly longer. Bless you. The immune system is stronger, so it also helps in terms of physical health. But now the question is the moral question: What about other people? How can I talk about or act in my life, pursuing my happiness isn't that selfish? And the answer is: "Yes, it is selfish." When I talk to myself, when I say to myself, "I want to be happier", I say to myself, "I want to be happier." That's a selfish thing. So it that bad? Is that immoral? Well, in our culture, selfishness and immorality have essentially become synonymous. And that's a problem. And here's why. Because this is the No. 1-- equating to selfishness and immorality is the No. 1 cause-- subconsciously mostly, but not only-- No. 1 cause of unhappiness. Because people feel guilty about pursuing their own happiness. People feel guilty at times feeling good about themselves. How can I? How dare I feel good about myself? How can I pursue my happiness when there is so much suffering in the world? And there is a lot of suffering in the world. So how do we respond to that?

First of all, happiness is a positive sum game-- it's not a zero sum game. Neither it is a negative sum game-- it's not that my happiness takes away from other people's happiness which will be a negative sum game: if I have more, you'll necessarily have less. It's not even a zero-- or rather if I have less, you'll have less- that's a negative sum game-- or a zero sum game-- if I have more, you'll have less- it's a fixed pie. It's not that. It's a positive sum game. Why? Because happiness is contagious. If I'm happier, I'm more likely to contribute to other people's happiness and wellbeing. Being happy, in other words, is also a moral state in the sense of actually contributing to other people's wellbeing. The Buddha talked about it thousands of years ago, "Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared." It's like passing on light. If you are happy, and work on your happiness, you are contributing indirectly to other people's happiness, just like the baby who laughed last time-- made you laugh. It's contagious. Generally people who work on their happiness-- again, not people

who experience constantly high, they would have difficulty having real relationships since they are dead-- but generally, people, those of us who are alive, who work on happiness, who experience the vicissitude of life-- the ups and downs-- but overall work on happiness and become happier and happier, have better relationships, more generous, more accepting of other people, more tolerant of other people as well as themselves.

There's a lot of research to show that helping ourselves, in other words, working on our happiness, contributing to our wellbeing, leads us to also be more generous and benevolent toward others. This is a research by one of the leading researchers, one of the first researches in the area of positive emotions, Alice Isen. And she showed, time and again, how feeling good is good for us and good for others, and it works the other way as well. This is a wonderful thing about happiness. It works the other way as well, because helping others also helps ourselves. Remember your task for this week-- a dozen of you have already read it-- it's to commit- above and beyond what you usually commit- five extra acts of kindness during one day. Five extra acts of kindness. This is a research done by Sonja Lyubomirsky-- I mentioned her book in the first class: "The how of happiness". She's done fantastic work, showing how people who help-- whether it's helping five extra acts during the week-- it can be more; doesn't have to be restricted to five-- or people who help five extra acts during one day, it's actually contributing to their wellbeing. So helping others is also helping ourselves. You know, one of the things that I say and only half ingest, is that I know of no more selfish act and a benevolent act. Again, only half ingest-- because the two are interconnected. And there is a self-enforcing loop between the two, where helping others helps ourselves; and helping ourselves, in turn, helps others. And rather than looking it as selfish-- some people may feel this ease way-- and rather than looking it as selfish i.e. -- equal immoral. We should look at it as something that is so wonderful about our nature, a part of our nature that we should celebrate. The fact that our happiness is tied

to others, the fact that we are tied to others in a web of empathy-- that's a wonderful thing about human nature. A thing that we need to celebrate much more than we are doing already.

Because remember, if we don't celebrate, if we don't appreciate that part of our nature, that part of our nature will depreciate. To appreciate has two meanings as we talked about: one is to say "thank you" for something and two is to grow. If we appreciate the good in our nature, in our inclinations, if we appreciate that part of our nature, it will appreciate and we'll have more of it. If we look down at it and say, "It's a terrible thing that I just derive benefits from helping other people", then that part of our nature will depreciate over time. For your readings, you are reading one of the meditations in my book, where I talk about it a little bit more in length, and I also gave the philosophical foundation, because in many ways this goes against "counting and thinking" that has been so dominant in our 20th and 21st century thinking about morality. It feels good to feel good. It also contributes to others to feel good.

I want to end this premise idea by talking a little bit about a person for whom, one of the chief purpose in life was to spread happiness-- Mahatma Gandhi. This is a story about him. There was a woman like many people came to ask for advice from Gandhi. And she came from very far away. And she brought her son along. And she said in front-- she got audience with Mahatma, and she said in front of him, "I came from afar, because I have a problem with my son. My son eats way too much sugar. And I'd like you to tell him to stop it. Because it's hurting his health, his teeth. And he will listen to you. He admires you." Gandhi looked at her and said, "Madam, can you please come back in a month?" She didn't know why but she listened to him after all-- he was Gandhi. She left, went far away, came all the way back a month later, and once again, got an audience with Gandhi. She said in front of him, She said "I was here a month ago." And he said, "Yes. I remember." And she said, "Could you please tell my

son to stop eating so much sugar?" So Gandhi looks at the child intensely and says, "Son, stop eating too much sugar." And that's it. The woman is obviously perplexed and musters up her courage, and says, "Mahatma, thank you very much. I'm sure he will stop eating too much sugar, but why couldn't you tell him this a month ago, when I came all the way here?" And he said, "Well, madam, because a month ago, I was eating too much sugar." Yeah, I know, it's a very sophisticated joke-- it takes a while, but I'm glad you got it. One of the things Gandhi said, that he talked about is from his wonderful autobiography, "My experiment with truth"-- "Be the change you want to see in the world." This is how you bring about change.

I want to do a quick exercise with you. This is a tough exercise especially for guys, but please bear with me. So-- if you don't feel comfortable doing it, don't do it-- what I'd like to do now is as following: Take your thumb and your middle finger and create as much as possible a 90 degree angle. May hurt a little bit, but try as much as possible to create a 90 degree angle. Ok, watch me: Just like this, Ok? 90 degree angle. Now take these two fingers-- the middle finger and the thumb-- and as much as possible, from that 90 degree angle, create a circle. Again, it's more difficult for men than for women-- less flexible. Create a circle. So it looks like a rabbit. If you have them on the show. Middle finger exactly and your thumb. Alright, just watch me. Like this. As much as possible. It's not perfectly round, but as much as possible. Now take that circle that

you have just created-- Can you see? That's a circle. Take that circle and put it on your cheek. Your other cheek. Ok, this could also take a while. But most people from what I see, put it on their chin. Now I said it very clearly, "cheek". But you see, here is the thing: People mostly do what you do, rather than what you say. So remember that, because I don't think there is anyone in this room who would tell me now, "my goal in life, my objective is to make people miserable. I really want to do that. You know I want everyone to be miserable in the world." There is not one person here who would actually say that, I hope. So most of us here, whatever we do in our

lives, now and in the future, are idealists. We want to do good in the world; we want to spread happiness. But remember, people do what you do, not what you say. So you may want to spread happiness, through your word. But ultimately, the best way, the optimal way spreading happiness is to work on your own happiness, because then you are leading by example.

That applies to leadership. The most important thing about leadership is not what you say; it's what you do. The most important thing about parenting-- it's not how much you tell your child "honesty is important" but rather how honest you are. If you want to spread happiness, "Be the change you want to see in the world." By example. So these are the five basic premises that we talked about. They formed the foundation of the course. And what we are going to do over the next couple of month is expand on these-- most importantly, see how we can take the research, the rigor and apply it to our lives.

So let me move on now to the next lecture, which is "Belief as Self-Fulfilling Prophecies". This I must say, this topic ignited my imagination when I was a kid when I thought about it; when I was an athlete. And that's when I understood the power of the mind. And that would pick my interests in psychology. I want to start with a story, a specific story, that in many ways I can say it is the first story, psychological story that I heard of. The story that I heard that brought home to me the message how important psychology is to wellbeing and to success.

And success, as a fourteen years-old squash player, was the most important thing in my life. And the story is of Roger Bannister. Just so I get a show of hands: how many people have heard of Roger Bannister? Ok. A handful. So those of you who have, can hear it again. Roger Bannister was a runner. He ran the mile. And until 1954, running the mile in under 4 minutes was considered impossible. In fact, doctors proved the 4 minutes for the mile was the limit of human ability. Physiologists ran

tests, showing, proving scientifically the limit of human ability was running the mile in 4 minutes. You could not go below that. And runners proved the doctors and scientists-- proved that they were right and ran the mile in two seconds and 4 minutes, one second, but no runner could run the mile in under 4 minutes, ever since the mile was actually timed-- when they started to time runs. It was impossible-- doctors and scientists showed, runners, athletes, the top-ones in the world proved that the doctors were right. And then came along Roger Bannister. Roger

Bannister said, "It is possible to run in 4 minutes. And in fact, I'm going to do it." Now when he said it, he was a medical doctor at Oxford University. He was a good runner, top runner, but nowhere near the 4 minutes mark. His best time was 4 minutes and 12 seconds. And of course, no one took him seriously. But Roger Bannister continued to train and work hard, not harder than the rest of the runners, but as hard as the top runners in the world. And he did get better. In fact, he broke the 4 minutes and 10 seconds mark, 4 minutes and 5 seconds mark and he got 4 minutes and 2 seconds and stopped, like everyone else-- could not go below the 4 minutes and 2 seconds. So he wasn't even the best runner in the world, but among the best. But he continued to say "it is possible; there is no human limitation on that; we can run the mile in under 4 minutes." And he continued to say, continued to train for years. Until 1954. On the 6th of May, 1954, on his home tour at Oxford University, Roger Bannister ran the mile in 3 minutes and 59 seconds. Sensation. Front page news all over the world. "Science defied". "Doctors defied". "The impossible made possible". It became known as the dream mile. Now listen to this. For decades, ever since the mile was timed, no one broke the four minute barrier. It was considered impossible. And on the 6th of May, Roger Bannister does it. Six weeks later, John Landy, the Australian runner, runs the mile in 3 minutes

57.9 seconds. The following year, 1955, 37 runners ran the mile in under 4 minutes.

1956, over 300 runners break the 4 minute barrier.

Now what happened? Was it that somebody started to train harder? Of course not.

Was it new technologies, new shoes? It wasn't. It was the mind. Look how powerful the mind is. It wasn't the fact that they were running that time and they say "Oops! We are over the speed limit! Let's slow down a little bit." Not at all! They were trying their hardest, their utmost. And yet, their subconscious mind limited them, prevented them from breaking that barrier that happened to be not a physical barrier as doctors, physiologists and scientists had claimed. It was a mental barrier. And what Roger Bannister did was break down the fort, the mental psychological fort. Beliefs are self-fulfilling prophecies. Very often they determine how we perform, how well or how poorly we perform. They often determine how good or not so good our relationships are. They are the No. 1 predictor of life success as well as wellbeing, as we'll talk about. So what we are going to talk about today and next time is how beliefs shape reality. How it works? What is the mechanism, the science behind the power of the mind? Because in many ways, this sounds like mysticism. And part of it is mystical-- still not understandable-- but we are going to talk about as much as we know-- why it works and how it works. There is unfortunately a lot of misunderstanding about optimism. Because the self-help movement in many ways is about telling us how it's all about the power of the mind, talk about "Think and grow rich", the book; we'll talk about the secrets which is about creating our reality through our thoughts. And there's some truth to these-- but only some truth. We are going to bridge Ivory tower and Main Street, and show the science and also the danger behind that belief. Most importantly, how do we apply? How do we enhance the belief in ourselves if there's such high correlation and there's a very high correlation and predictive power to a sense of hope, to a sense of optimism, to beliefs. If they so much determine

our outcome, in the athletic field, in the workplace, in a relationship-- if it matters so much, then how can we raise our beliefs?

And we'll talk about work by Bandura on self-efficacy, or by Nathaniel Branden on self-esteem. How we can make a dream into reality-- whether it's political dream--

we'll talk about Martin Luther King's dream approach- how he did it and what he did; or a personal dream, where we'll talk about the work of Herbert Benson as well as Bandura. Once again, the Buddha, "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make our world." Again, this was a claim made thousands of years ago. What I want to do now is focus on the scientific foundation of this claim.

And I'll start by talking about Pygmalion in the classroom. The source of the word, Pygmalion is ancient Greece. Pygmalion was a sculptor. And what he did was when he came of age looking for his ideal woman. He wanted to get married. So he went and looked around Athens where he lived; he looked around the all of Greece; he looked around the Greek Empire; he looked beyond the Greek Empire, looking for his ideal woman-- a woman whom he could marry. And he couldn't find her, no matter where he looked. I mean it's understandable-- this was before 1879 which was when Red Cliff was founded, and long before Harvard became co-ed. So he couldn't find his ideal woman and he went back to Athens. And he said to himself. "Well, instead of finding that ideal woman, I will create a sculpture"-- as he was a sculptor, "I will create a sculpture in her image." And he created that sculpture. And when he looked at her, he was so overwhelmed with emotion and sadness that he couldn't find her, that he began to cry. And then Zeus, Athena and especially Aphrodite, looking down on him, took mercy and brought the statue to life. And of course, they lived happily ever after. So this is the source of the word, Pygmalion. Pygmalion was then taken by George Bernard Shaw, who created a play based on a similar idea which was made into a musical, "My Fair Lady". The idea here is how Higgins, doctor, linguist, took a flower girl and molded her in the sense into being royalty. What of course happened through the story was that she molded him more and transformed him. Fascinating story and very important story at the time. Because it challenged the whole class system, that people are born into a certain place and cannot-- and should not-- be

moved. So a very important play at that time, as well as today. About Pygmalion and people can be changed, can be transformed.

In the 1960s, Robert Rosenthal who was the head of our department for many years-- he's now in UC Riverside-- took this idea of Pygmalion and applied it in the classroom. Here is what he did. Rosenthal went into a group of random schools. And what he did there was went to the students, had them take a test and then go to their teachers after and tell the teachers, "Your students just took a new test that was devised-- a new academic test which is called "the fast spurters' test". What that means is that we identify students who are going to take a big leap, intellectual leap

forward in this coming year, a spurt forward in this coming year. In other words, what he was saying-- it identifies students with highest potential. And what he found then was when he told these students-- the teachers-- what he told these teachers was that "it is just not a FYI-- you cannot tell the students this. We don't want any discrimination in your school, but just so you know, these are your fast spurters. It's a new test, newly devised. Just so you know." Unbeknownst to the teachers, the actual test which was given to those students was a regular off-the-shelf IQ test. Also unbeknownst to the teachers was these students names, who were deemed "the fast spurters"/"high potential students", were literally randomly picked out from a hat. So there were regular students, like all other students, but the teachers thought they were "fast spurters". Robert Rosenthal leaves the school, comes back in the end of the year. And here's what he finds-- he looks at their English scores: the "fast spurters" improved significantly more than any of the other students. He looked at their maths scores, because English is not really objective and you know maybe it was the teachers who thought they were better than they were really. So he looked at their maths, their objective scores. These students improved significantly more than any of the other students. But here is the clincher: Robert Rosenthal administered once again an IQ test for all the students. And what he found was the students who were labeled--

randomly so, but who were labeled-- "fast spurters", their IQ increased significantly over the year and maintained that increase in a longitudinal study.

Now this is my bog I mean: IQ is supposed to be in your intelligent quotient that you are born with! It's immutable. It doesn't change from the day you were born to the day you die-- or so they thought. It changed significantly just based the belief that the teacher had in her/his students. Belief as self-fulfilling prophecies. What happened in the study? Was it that the teachers were fooled? And suddenly were made to see an illusion? No. It was that they were alluded before. and the illusion was that they didn't see what is right in front of their very eyes, which is the potential inherent in every single student. And then Robert Rosenthal comes and fools them in a sense, but "fools" them into seeing what has been there all along. Before Rosenthal, they didn't see children on the bus. So to speak. After that, they suddenly in some children saw the potential that was there all along. And they appreciated that potential and that potential appreciated. They watered, they shed a light to it and the seed germinated and grew. This is exactly what Marva Collins does day in and day out in school. She seed the potential that is there; she's not even inventing something. She's not detached from reality. It's rather the people who don't see the potential in other people as well as in themselves as we'll discuss. They are not seeing the full reality. They are only seeing part of it. They are completely missing the children on the bus. And we know how easy it is to miss part of reality, even they are right in front of our very eyes. Or it often takes a question-- it takes on the quest and we miss what we have seen before, whether it was research with at-risk population, whether it was the geometric shapes, whether it was asking only the negative questions about our relationship or about ourselves, or whether it's not seeing the potential that exist in just about all kids. If only we see it. And if we see it, appreciate it, we water it, we shed a light to it, and it appreciates, it grows. So what Rosenthal did was simply shift their attention to something that was there all along. Same in the workplace. Replicated hundreds,

thousands of times.

the Pygmalion effect. It was replicated in a workplace where leaders are told or managers are told "these are your top, highest potential employees". And these employees, again, randomly picked, actually became the highest potential employees. And they succeeded much more. Retention went up for them; performance went up; they were more likely to advance in their organization and stay in their organization. Just as result of expectation. The source of works of the other way,

Jamison, back in 1997, this fascinating study, where what she said was let's see if it works the other way. So she went to two classes that were taught by the same teacher, and before the classes were started, told just one of the classes that this teacher was ranked extremely highly by other students before, that they, as professional psychologists rated that teacher as extremely high. And they left them. What happened by the end of the year? First of all, the teacher was rated higher by the intervention group than by the control group. But also, the students put in actually more time into the class and they outperformed the control group. Because they believed-- they were made to believe that the teacher was better than supposedly he/she were. In other words, they saw the potential in the teacher. They performed-- not only the teacher; the teacher did perform better-- but the students actually performed better when they had high expectations, when they believed in their teachers. So if you want to do well in 1504-- you'll know what you need to do, right?

It works-- beliefs as self-fulfilling prophecies. We create our reality. Goethe, "Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be, and he shall become as he can and should be." I want to move on now to a related topic, one that is very important for psychologist but also for you to apply in your life. And that is the importance of situation we create or that is created for us. In many

research that was done on the power of the situation, but it was mostly the negative power of the situation. Those of you taken psych 1, those of you haven't, may have heard of the "Asch Conformity Experiment", where people conformed to the idea of the group. Or many of you probably heard of Milgram's "The obedience to authority". If you haven't heard about them, I am not going to go in depth here, read about it. Just Google it. Some of the most important fascinating studies in the field of psychology where a person off the street was told by an experimenter to shock another person, even to the point where the other person is screaming to stop. And because the experimenters were saying the experiment must go on and very often had a white cloak like doctors or experimenters-- a cloak around them. Because they said the experiment must go on, very often, people went-- most people, Americans went on and shocked that person, even to the point of the other person whimpering and begging to be let out, simply because of the word, "the experiment must go on". The power of the situation, obedience to authority-- this was

done in order to show how something like the Holocaust could only happen in Germany; how people are more likely to be obedient to authority and what they found globally, worldwide, people have the tendency to be obedient to authority, whether it was in United States or in Germany. Around the world. Same replicated.

The power of the situation. Philip Zimbardo's Prison Experiment. This was done at Stanford, where they did was taking-- again, read about it if you haven't; I am not going to go in depth here-- where they took people off the street and had them play the role of either the prison warden, the guard or the prisoner. And the experiment was supposed to go on for two weeks to show what entering a role does. And what they found was after a week, the experiment had to be stopped. Because the wardens-- people off the street, randomly divided-- were becoming so oppressive. They humiliated the prisoners who got into their position of being humiliated, just like

happened in the Iraqi prisons, of how people off the street enter the role-- they entered the role so much that Zimbardo had to stop the experiment after one week. Go on YouTube and watch the video about this mind-boggling stuff. So this is only important, good to know, important to know, but not enough. Because the situation is so powerful, why just emphasize the negative? Why not think about creating positive situations that will help us lead happier, more moral lives? And this has, just like a lot of positive psychological approaches, has been ignored with a ratio 21 to 1.

So let me share with you just a couple of studies in this area. Both of them done by our very own Ellen Langer. This, by the way, is the study that I am going to share now is going to be backbone of a movie coming out about Professor Langer-- the person who's going to play Ellen Langer-- she's the first female tenure professor in the psychology department the person who's going to play Ellen Langer is Jennifer Aniston. And the movie is coming out, hopefully in a year, but it's about the experiment that I am going to share with you now. So this was done in 1979. Here was what Langer did. What she did was take men who were above 75 years old and sent them to a retreat, which was a 1959 retreat, meaning-- even though it was 1979-- the music was from 1959, the magazines that they read that were all around were

1959, the daily newspapers were 1959-- everything was 1959. Even they had to go into a role, just like in Zimbardo, they had to play their role of 1959 as if they were 20 years younger. Now of course, it was a psychological experiment, they had all these different measures, taken before/after. And here is what they found. One week. Retreat. At the end of the week, At the end of the week, both mental and biological age decreased. For example, they became more flexible in tests. They became stronger-- their grasp, their legs, their bodies became stronger. Their memory improved significantly, so their intelligence level as taking by tests before and after compared to control group improved significantly after a single week. She measured

becomes smaller-- they become tighter. The length after a week, increased in their fingers. They

became happier. They became more self-sufficient, less dependent on other people as rated by themselves and as rated by their family members. They became healthier. Their eyesight and hearing improved significantly in as little as a week. Just because they entered a powerful, positive situation, which goes against a lot of the stereotypes and prejudices that they encountered in the outside world. So just by "acting" a certain role, they became that role just like Zimbardo's prisoners became their role in as little as a week.

Another study that she did-- and this is a report in her book, "Mindfulness", which I highly recommend. She took in and tested people's eyesight. And she gave them a normal eyesight chart, measured them, wrote down their performance. And then she took the exact same people-- this time, put them in a pilot overalls and at the same time put them in a flight simulator and showed them the exact same the eye chart. Same distance, same eye chart, the only difference being they're sitting in a flight simulator and they were wearing pilot overalls. They were sitting there, looking at the eye chart. And again, she ran the eye test. 40% of participants eyesight improved significantly, as a result of just changing the situation. Same distance, same chart, same everything. Different situation. The question is how do we create a positive situation. How can we create a situation that improves us with the role. And I want to share with you couple of studies

I'll share one study and then another later-- about the environment. First of all, the work of Barge, priming is when we have subconscious or conscious priming. For example, you are looking at a screen and for just a few milliseconds, a word appears. And the word primes you. There is a lot of research on how we can prime your negatively with stereotypes for example, with prejudices. Or positively-- but not enough from positively. So here's a story done by Barge. He primed people with

words associated with old. So for example, word such as old, word such as stick, word such as Florida-- that's one of the words he primed people with. So he primed people with "old" words. And then he had them take a comparative and control group an intelligence test and a memory test. The memory of the people who were primed with "old" words. They performed the worst than the control group. Second, he looked at these people and measured how fast they walk from where their experiment was to the elevator. And also had blind evaluators-- people who didn't know which condition they were in, evaluate how they were walking. So the people who were primed with old actually walked more (?) than the other people. And they walk significantly slower toward the elevator, not knowing that they were primed with old words. They walk slower toward the elevator., then the people who were not primed with these old words, subconscious completely. And then they did something priming people with words related to an achievement. The people who were primed, subconsciously with words related to achievement, did better on tests than control group. Their memory improved, and they persisted more on difficult tasks. And the question is-- the thing we'll talk about next time-- is how can we create consciously and subconsciously a positive environment where we actually can take out the most moral, most successful self, to appreciate that self, to help the environment bring out the best in us. Next time.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 6

Hope you had a wonderful long weekend. So, let's jump right into it. So where did we leave last time? Last time we talked about the power of the situation, we talk about how beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies. And how it is through the situation that we very often create expectations, beliefs of people. And these beliefs become reality. And we talked about how social psychology essentially started with some very important experiment such as the Milgrim effect, or obedience to authority. Such as Zimbardo's prison experiment, where prisoners were put in or played... students play the role of prisoners or the role of wardens and they actually entered that role so totally that after a week the experiment had to be stop, when it was suppose to go on for two weeks. And then the question we asked was, OK, so we know that the situation is powerful. We know that it makes a difference. Can we also create a powerful, positive situation to bring out the best in people? And the answer is yes. And we started talking about it and we talk about professor Langer and her research and how she show that putting um...elderly men in an environment where they were actually or where they acted as if they were 20 years younger actually became younger. To the point of having higher levels of intelligence. To the point of improving their memory. Improving their eyesight, improving their hearing. The distance between the bones in their figures actually became longer which is a sign of younger age.

They were rated by others as well as by themselves as stronger and younger just because they acted as if it was 1959 instead of what it was really was, which was 1979. The power of the positive situation. And then she did another more research on people going for an eyesight test, and put them in a situation in a flight simulator. And the exact same eyesight test, they actually performed better just because of the situation. And we moved on that what we ended last time by talking about priming. Priming is...

can be done in the conscious or subconscious level. It means planting a seed, planting a belief, planting a word, or a picture in our mind, consciously or subconsciously. And how that actually influences our behavior.

So Bargh, that time of NYU, did the research where he primed to people with words associated with old. Words if you remember such as wrinkles, words such as old, words such as Florida. And as a result of this priming, those participants in the study actually walked slower, or actually were more stooped. When evaluated by researchers who were not aware of their condition ,meaning they didn't know whether they were primed with control words, just random words, or with words associated with old. So it was just through the priming that people actually started to behave differently. The power of the situation. The power of the environment. And then Bargh took it step

further and said, OK, let's prime them with positive primes such as achievement, such as persistence, such as success. These words, for example, they had to find a synonym for the word achievement. Those who are primed with these words on intelligence test and on memory test actually performed better than the control group who wasn't primed with these words.

Two Dutch researchers - Dijksterhuis & Knippenberg, what they found was that they brought people, and they ask them to describe for future experiment, not for that experiment. For a future experiment, ask them to describe a soccer hooligan, a secretary and a professor. Describe these three archetypes. And they told them this is for the next experiment where we just want people to evaluate these archetypes. Not knowing that actually by describing these archetypes, these individuals were primed. They were primed for a soccer hooligan, for a secretary, or for a professor. And then they have to do intelligence tests afterwards, memory test after those primes. Those who had to describe the day of soccer hooligan performed the worse. In terms of memory. In term of intelligence. Then there was the secretary and those who

performed the best were those who described the professor. Now they didn't study any harder before. Nothing changed except for the fact that there was a prime, that there was something planted from the environment in their minds. The question then is, how can we create a positive environment for ourselves, where we are primed by the positive, where we can be happier, more successful and so on. And there's many ways in which we can do it. Let me share a few. In fact there's going to be your assignment for this week, or one of the assignments to create a positive environment.

So you are some of the examples. Have pictures of people you love or places you love, the importance of these things is that even if you don't see them, you see them. So on the subconscious level it's still there. Even though on the subconscious level, when people are primed, they don't really see...the word, say achievement on the screen, when it's there for 25 mini-second, they don't really see it, but it registers. So even if a picture is there and you don't — really || see it or not really conscious of it, mindful of it, it still has a impact on you. So have pictures of people you love, have pleasant object, whether it's memorabilia, whether it's flowers, whether it's art, your

favorite art. So I have in my house, and my office, my favorite art on the wall, by my favorite artists. And let me share with you a few. I actually brought them here. These are very valuable. I insured them, so it's not a problem. So... so this is, um, this specific artist from the first phase of his career, as you can see, you know, very powerful strokes, very intense, very deliberate, and just gorgeous. And here is, by the same artist from the second phase of his career. Here you already begin to see impressionist influence on his work. But still, you know you see the same trait, the same power, the same intensity. So I have these on my wall.

There's a new and upcoming artist who I want to introduce you to. She still doesn't have a second phase, you know, she's only one year's old. But, you know, this is a work done with the help of her

Mom. But again, these are on my wall and they

remind me everyday even I've seen them hundreds of time, it's still there and I think about my kids. And I also have other, you know, less known artists' work on my wall. Again, this is, probably not heard of this one, um, this is Rodin, The Thinker. And, so I have this on my wall, it's my favorite sculpture. And then I have another piece by Rodin just to remind me that it's not all about thinking, there are other things that make life make life worth living. So this is Rodin's The Kiss, for those of you who know it. And again have these things on your wall create(s) the environment where you feel warm, where it's fun for you to be there. Quotes, you know I love quotes, and I know that many of you love quotes. Some of you have sent me your favorite quotes. I have on my wall a list of quotes and they are there even if I don't see them, I see them. So for example, let's see if I brought some here. Yes, here they are. So one is by John Quincy Adams. "Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish". So priming the issue of persistence, by the way which is one thing that Bargh did it. He primed that and people actually became more persistent. George Eliot, or also known as Mary Anne Evans, my favorite author. She wrote, "The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men || . I'll talk about perfectionism which is a very

important, very personal thing for me in about three weeks. So she is a very much a role model. Camus, "In the depth of winter, I finally learned that there was within me an invincible summer".

A quote that has helped me through difficult, through hard times. Henry David Thoreau, "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with success, unexpected in common hours ". Again, I have these quotes up on my wall, and a few others, that many of the quotes that you've seen in the course. And they prime me, they remind me, they create the environment for me. We'll talk about art in the next section, and its importance. Have your favorite books next to you. Listen to music, but listen to it mindfully, not

just as background music but the music that inspires you, whether it's rocky, whether it's Eminem, whoever it is. Watch films that inspire you, all these things help you to create an environment that is conducive to growth, to success, to well being. A lot of this is done on the subconscious level which is the power of the priming. A priming studies. And finally this is what positive research is about. If we constantly focus on "negative" research, anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, we are primed by this research, we are primed by this work. And it creates reality. You know, this indirectly and conjunctionally relates to, some of you may know, the Isenberg principle, is that when you measure a phenomenon, you are changing the phenomenon; when you are measuring a phenomenon, you are also changing yourself. So by researching the positive we are also priming ourselves with the positive. Now, a lot of this work that I'm talking about today and I'll talk about next time actually comes from the self-help movement. In many ways the self-help movement was founded, was started in the

20th century... was started with the understanding that we create the world through our thinking, that our mind creates the world. And books like these came out, back in the 1930's, Thinking

Grow Rich.

This book since 1930's sold over 60 million copies. It's still selling. It's selling, it's the best seller in the US, it's the best seller in China, in India, it's the best seller in Africa, it's the best seller in Europe. It has an impact on people and here's one of the things that Napoleon Hill says, "Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve." Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve. Very empowering. And this had an impact on many different people, on the masses, again, 60 million copies, one of the best sellers in history. Henry Ford had a similar idea, "Whether you think you can or can't, you are right." And people were drawn to this message. Why? Because it's empowering, because it makes them feel that things are possible. Another very influential book, The Power of Positive Thinking, Norman Vincent Peale. "

Have great hopes and dare to go all out for them. Have great dreams and dare to live them. Have tremendous expectations and believe in them. || How inspiring for people to hear that, all you need to do is think, all you need to do is believe, and affluence will come to you. Whether it's intrapersonal affluence, whether it's monetary affluence. And this is been the message that has drawn the masses and continues to do so today. The best selling book today, No.1 best seller all over the world, that's right, The Secret. The secret to success is, what they call, the law of attraction. The law of attraction is that you attract to your life whatever you imaging ,whatever you believe it. Again, a powerful message, millions and millions of copies of this book being sold. As we speak, continue to be sold.

And the message is again simple: believe, and you will achieve; conceive, and it will be conceived. In reality, in the world, it will come to you. Very convincing, very inspiring message. But, is this message right? Well, we talked about this and we saw the Roger Bannister story. You know one day, or six weeks after Roger Bannister runs a mile in 4 minutes, or in 3'59, John Landy runs it in 3'57.9. The year after 37 runners run the mile in under 4 minutes. So there is something to it. Once they believed it was possible, it became possible. And here is the issue, with much of what's going on in the self-help today, self-help realm today, it draws on a truth, a real truth and then blows it out of proportion. So yes, there is some truth in the fact that our mind creates reality. But that's only part of the truth. We create reality or rather we co-create reality. There has to be something out there or in there, for example, when it comes to The Secret. If you believe that you are likely to succeed, you are much more likely to succeed. But that has to come with a lot of hard work and persistence, it has to come with a lot of failure, and learning from that failure.

So it's just half of the equation and what these self-help books and messages do is overpromise and under-deliver, which at times can be destructive. For example, if

everything is based on the law of attraction. I created everything that everything is up to me and also everything is my fault. Even taking to the extreme, is a 3 years old girl responsible for being

abused? Is a 30 years old man responsible for being paralyzed as a result of an accident by a drunken driver? There are certain things that are out there and when we say that everything is up to us, everything is created by the law of attraction, then it's a prescription maybe in the short term for inspiration and for belief and for wellbeing, but in the long term, it's for frustration, for guilt, and for unhappiness. And also for less success because if I really believe that it's all about thinking, then this is going to be my mind set. All I need to do is believe and then all the money will come to me. All the success in a relationship will come to me. And that does away with the hard work, with the persistence, with the failure that is necessary, part and parcel of a successful, happy, fulfilling, human life. I want to show you a quick video. This is of an ad I saw online and I actually called the Royal Bank on Scotland and asked them to send me the original. Because it captures some of the misunderstanding that there is today about the power of the mind. Just a very cute ad.

Douglas from the conference. –

that?

James Aderson. - Oh, yeah. That's a lot of green. What kind of bird is it? - What's

I don't know.

It's ok guys! I've done a course. -What? -Positive thinking. Positive thought makes a positive impact. OK? Positive thought has a positive impact. Look at me. That's right. Okay, come on. (Emergency Start) Talk is no substitute for action. That's the power. Make it happen. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group.

I am good. - Yes, you are. It captures part of the truth but not the whole truth. So

let's see what serious research has to say about the power of the mind. A real phenomenon, actual phenomenon, but one that we need to also apply real research to see what works. Albert Bandura, on your reading about for this week, has done a lot of work on the concept of self-efficacy which is essentially the academic term for believing in oneself. And here is what he writes after decades and decades of research. He by the way won the researcher's prize for the positive psychologists last year so he's doing a lot of research in this area. He's from Stanford. "Beliefs in personal efficacy affect life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning,

resilience to adversity and vulnerability to stress and depression." Those you believe in themselves, who have confidence, do well across the different areas in their lives, He continues, "People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it." In other words, what he's talking about here is that these people are scribed in their lives. They create their own lives as oppose to those that are being prescribed by others. They are more resilient, better able to deal with hardships and difficulties. In other words, better capacity as we discussed earlier to deal with difficulties. Now the important thing about this research, in his research over the years is that it can be learned. It's cultivated over time.

So it would be useless if, in terms of research, at least for us if he would say, well, some people are born with it, and others are not. Some people are born with, what they started to talk about, the resilience gene, and others are not born with that. But that's not the case. What he has shown is that it can be learned. It takes time it takes effort, and we will talk about later how we do it. But the important thing, it's malleable. We can do something about it. Other research by Curry on college athletes,

I know there are many athletes in this room. She showed that 56% of your successes as an athlete, once you start being an athlete, is determined by levels of hope, by how much you believe that you are going to succeed. Remember from very first or second

class where I talked about the research by John Carter, about the business...HBS graduates. Where he predicted... where the two things predicted success in the long term, extraordinary success of these grads. One was that they were constantly asking questions, and two was that they believed in themselves.

They thought they could do well. But it's important to also realize that it's not

100 percent of the variances that was explained, by hope, or by belief, or by optimism, as many of the self-help books would have us believe. But it's certainly part of the equation of success. Nathaniel Branden has been a therapist for fifty years; he's done

a lot of rigorous philosophical and psychological research and work on the concept of self-esteem. We'll visit him more in-depth when we talk about, when we have the week on self-esteem. But for now, just a quick quote: "the level of our self-esteem, in

another words, the level of our belief in ourselves, has profound consequences for every aspect of our existence: how we operate in the workplace, how we deal with people, how high we are likely to rise, how much we are likely to achieve and, in the personal realm, with whom we are likely to fall in love, how we interact with our spouse, children, and friends, what level of personal happiness we attain." Very low levels of correlation between material affluence and wellbeing, or between where we live and wellbeing, very high correlation between self-esteem and wellbeing. In most research what we found is a 0.7 correlation between the two constructs. This is what I found in my dissertation as well. So self-esteem matters. The internal matters and what we are doing when we enhance when we raise our levels of belief in ourselves is we are transforming our

mind, we are changing the form, so that we see we interact, we see the world differently, we perceive different things, we experience things in a different way. Whether it's successes that we then celebrate, or failures that we then

learn from and turn into opportunities. But so much of it is about what we have inside here.

Branden, "self-concept is destiny." Very similar to —whatever your mind can conceive, it can achieve || from Napoleon Hill. The only difference being that he also puts a lot of rigorous thinking and research there and shows the limitation of the belief.

Here is another example of research done in the area which most people know about. The Placebo effect. You go to the doctor, you have a headache, the doctor tells you: here I have a pill for you. The best thing. Just came out recently. Will help you get over the headache. Gives you the pill. You get over the headache. Unbeknownst to you, what she gave you was, a sugar pill. But because you thought, because you believed that it would help your headache, it actually did help your headache. Real phenomena medicine. So Herbert Benson, from the across the river, from the medical school here, has done a lot of research in this area. Let me share with you just two of his studies. What Benson did was bringing women who had, who were pregnant, and who had stomach problems... they were vomiting, they were throwing up, they were nauseous, something which is relatively common especially in the first trimester of pregnancy. So he brought them in and told them, "I have this new pill for you that will help you overcome your stomach distress. You won't throw up any more after; this is

a very powerful and good pill." So he gave them that pill and they got over their stomach distress, they were better. They didn't know of course this was just a placebo drug, just a sugar pill.

Then he took it step further, brought in another group of women with the exact same stomach distress, with the same vomiting. Gave them the pill, he told them would help them overcome their stomach distress. Only this time, instead of a sugar pill, he actually gave them small dosage, not dangerous but small dosage of ipecac.

Now those of you who know what ipecac is... It's a drug that we take if we want to

throw up. So if we have food poisoning, we take these drugs and it will actually elicit vomiting. So he gave them this drug and again, this passed all the ethic reviews and was not dangerous, you know But that's what he did. And these women were told that

they'd get better. And they did get better. Not only did they not vomit as they should

have done, more so with the ipecac, they actually stopped. Let me read to you an excerpt from his book, which I highly recommend, Timeless Healing. I quote, "Remarkably, the patients' nausea and vomiting ceased entirely and their stomach

contractions, as measured through the balloons, returned to normal. Because they believed they received anti-nausea medicine, the women reversed the proven action of a powerful drug.

Even though many of us stock our medicine cabinets and first aid kits with ipecac to bring about vomiting in case of poisoning, these pregnant women with documented stomach distress thwarted the action of a drug that should have made them even sicker. With belief alone, they cured themselves. || Now, this doesn't mean that drugs don't have an effect. You know, I don't recommend going home now and, you know, giving your roommates, you know, ipecac or even worse cyanide and then tell them this is actually Vitamin C. they will probably not feel better or healthier as a result. But what this experiment dose, and many others like it show is that powerful effect of the mind which we shouldn't discard. We need to study it and understand. Well, here is another experiment that Benson writes about in his book. This was done in Japan. So, people who are allergic to a specific plant were brought into a lab, had their eyes closed, and then, they had these plant touch their forearm, and then they had another plant touch their other forearm, and they didn't know which was which. And of course that plant that they were allergic to, the arm flared up. They were allergic to it after all. But then, their was a second condition, these people were told that the actual drug(plant) that they are allergic to touched their left hand, and another plant

that they were not allergic to touched their right hand.

But Benson reversed the effect, so actually the plant that they were allergic to touched their right hand, and the plant that they were not allergic to touched their left

hand. So they were supposed to flare up on the right, not on the left. But because they believed that the allergic plant was on the left, their left hand flared up, their right hand did not. Based on the power of the mind. Once again, this does not mean that the external doesn't matter and that we attracted everything that we want to into our lives,

but it does mean that the mind plays a very important role in creating our physical, certainly emotional, cognitive as well as external reality. Beliefs very often become self-fulfilling prophecies. But how does it work? How does it work? Let me share with you this model that I created based on a lot of research in the field. That essentially tries to explain how our beliefs, our expectations impact our performance.

Whether it's through the placebo drug, whether it's our performance in school, in

sports, in relationships, in every area in our lives. In other words, what comes in the box here? Or in the...over here? What comes, what mediate between beliefs, expectations and actual performance in the real world? I want to talk about two mechanisms. The first one is very straight forward, relatively simple, it's motivation.

So, if I believe that I can do well, and think about your own past experiences, when you believe that you could do well in something, you are much more likely to be motivated than if you think

that you are hopeless and have no chance, you are much more likely to resign and not do anything. You are much more likely to be motivated before the event whatever the event may be, in training, in practice, as well as during the event, while it's taking place.

Think about what Marva Collins did. She motivated her students, she made them believe that they could achieve, that they could make something out of their lives and that it's their responsibility that it was up to them, and that made all the difference for

them. Because they were motivated, they worked hard. So motivation makes a difference. There is another thing though, in addition to motivation, and that is the notion of consistency or congruence. What does that mean? You see, we all have a mental schema of the world, a mental schema of the way the world should be, or to be

or is. For example, I have a mental schema that suggests that things fall when left in middle air. So I have a schema that says that if I dropped this, it would actually fall. I have a schema about my ability in mathematics that I might be a good mathematician, that I have potential in this area or not. I also have the schema about other people. I like this person. That person is a nice person versus this person is just not nice, cruel. So we have schemas about other people, about ourselves, about natural phenomenon. This is inside, the schema. And then, there is the outside world. In the outside world, actual things take place. For example, when this is left in middle air, it falls. This is, has nothing to do with my schema. It's outside. It happens regardless of my schema.

Now I have certain potential in mathematics regardless of my schema.

A certain person behaves generously and benevolently toward other people or in a hateful manner toward other people regardless of my schema. So there is what's inside and what is outside, and here is the key point. You see, the mind does not like when there is a discrepancy between what is inside and what is outside. The mind likes when there is consistency, congruence between the two, and if there is no congruence, if there is no consistency, then we experience a sense of dissidence, then we experience disease. Doesn't feel good, doesn't feel right and we do, very often, everything that we can to get the two on par again. Either by changing the external reality or by changing our mind to match the external reality. We don't like when there is inconsistency. There are a few ways in which we can create this consistency again. Let me share with you just some of them, and I'm gonna share four.

They are interconnected. There is relationship between. there is overlap, but just so it helps you to think about it. That helps you understand the dialogue that takes place between what is inside or what is inside and what is outside. So the first thing we can do when there is a discrepancy, when there is inconsistency between the two is

update schema. This is the first thing we can do. So, I didn't know things fell when

left in middle air, now I know, I updated my schema. Or, I thought that person was actually hateful, but I just saw him behave generously and benevolently, now I update my schema, he's a nice person. The second thing that we do, which happens much

more often than the first one, is ignore or discard external information. We ignore and discard external information that doesn't match our schema. We don't like this inconsistency, we just throw this inconsistency out, so to speak, by ignoring it, discarding it. The third thing we do, we actively seek confirmation. We actively seek confirmatory data.

I mean, think about No.2 and 3, think about in the real you know we are in the midst of election year. Think about the person you are not going to vote for, or the person you didn't vote for. What we do? Very often, let's say, I see President Bush doing something good, actually fighting for a cause that I believe in. But I didn't vote Bush, for instance. Very often what I would do is ignore and discard that information, and then look for confirming evidence that will suggest...or that will confirm to me why I don't like Bush in the first place. This same regarding, say the future elections,

Hillary or Obama. If I dislike them, I would look for confirming evidence why I dislike them and even if they do things that I like and value and believe in, I very often will ignore these things and discard them. And what you are doing here, you are creating a reality because you are asking a question such as where has Bush done terrible things or where has Hillary or Obama did terrible things? And when we ask these questions, we completely ignore, discard, not see the positives. Remember when I ask you about the geometric shapes? You didn't see the children on the bus. Even though they were right there in front your very eyes. So we know that questions create

reality, and in order to maintain this consistency, we do very often one of these two things. Either ignore and discard, or seek confirming evidence, positive or negative to back up our schema. Hillary, Obama is good or Bush is good or whatever it is that we are thinking about. The fourth thing is much more directly, creating a new reality.

What kind of reality existed before the 6th of May, 1954? It was reality in which four minutes was the limit of human ability. And what did Edison do, sorry, what did Bannister do? He said it's possible and then he changed the external reality. Not just

for himself, but also for other runners in the world. And suddenly a new reality was created. Initially the schema was four minutes is not possible, or rather four minutes is not possible and everyone adhered to this schema. Roger Bannister came and said, it is possible, and changed that reality, not just for himself, but for other runners who were there. The thing though is, that after we perform with high motivation, low motivation might looking for consistency. All that is left us to do is interpret our performance. Was it successful or not successful, and good or bad? And there are two forms of interpretation. One is the objective interpretation, did I just give A in an exam or did I get a C. Did I just come third or did I come last in their race. Did I just be Princeton in

hockey on Friday?

Or did I lose to Princeton? Go Harvard. So what happen? This is the reality. It's

objective, its objective. But then, there is also the subjective interpretation based on my beliefs.

Let me share an example with you... This is a story told about Thomas

Edison. Thomas Edison, back in the 1870's, was working along with the rest of the

scientific community on the light bulb, on generating light from electricity. The entire scientific community or much of it was working on that, on that issue, with no success, Thomas Edison being no exception. A journalist from one of the local papers came to Thomas Edison to interview. He was already famous by then, he invented many things. And they were talking about various things and then they got to talk about the

light bulb. And the journalist said to Edison, " Mr. Edison, you've been working on the

light bulb for many years. The rest of the scientific community has been working on it, to no avail." Now at that point Thomas Edison had conducted 5000 experiments, so, and the journalist knew that so he told Edison, "Mr. Edison, you've conducted 5000

experiments, and you failed 5000 times. Give it up."

Now Thomas Edison, some of you may know was also hard of hearing, in fact one of his patents was a hearing aid. So he said to the journalist, " Excuse me, what

did you say?" The journalist said, " well, I said you failed 5000 times, give it up." So

Edison responded, "I didn't fail 5000 times. I succeeded 5000 times. I succeeded in showing what doesn't work." Same objective reality, performance, 5000 failed experiments, but very different interpretation. The journalist and many other people in

the scientific community conclude its not possible, the interpretation, subjective interpretation of Edison it's just another stepping stone towards success because it is possible. In fact, Edison declared, before he had the light bulb, that on the 31st of

December, 1879, he would display the light bulb. That was long before he had done it. On the 31st of December, 1879, Edison displayed to the world, generating light from electricity. Just like in 1962, John F. Kennedy said that there would be a man on the moon by the end of the decade. And there was before we had the materials necessary for doing it, before we had other technology necessary for doing it. He threw his knapsack over the world and said it's possible to do it. And that created a reality. That

was coupled with a lot of hard work. Edison in fact failed more than 5000 more times before he actually created the light bulb. It wasn't just sitting his room and saying, "I believe therefore I will achieve." It was I believe and I will work even harder now,

with more motivation and so on. One of his mantras, — I failed my way to success. || It

is no coincidence that Edison, by far the most creative and productive scientific genius of all time.

He patented 1097 patents in his career. Much of our world looks the way it looks, thanks to him. No coincidence, but the most successful, creative scientist in history is also, as far as we know, the scientist who had failed the most times. Research by Dean Simonton, we'll talk about it more depth when we talked about perfectionism. Research by Dean Simonton shows that the most successful scientists and artists through our history were also the ones who failed the most times. No coincidence that

"Babe" Ruth, who hit during many of the years when he played the most homeruns, also hit the most strike outs. In five of these seasons, was strike out the most times rather. The most successful people in history are also very often, the people who had failed the most times. This is a sentence that I'll repeat it over and over again in the

class and here it is: learn to fail, or fail to learn. Learn to fail, or fail to learn, there is no other way to succeed. There is no other way to learn, in terms of how to work, and there is no other way to learn in terms of learning how to succeed as scientist, or as a politician, or as an artist. The artists, as Dean Simonton showed, who had the most dubs, the most failed attempts through out history were also the artists who were the most successful in the long run. No short cuts. It's not enough to just sit down and

think, and conceive and believe. We need to do much more than that.

Martin Seligman, considered father of positive psychology, has done a lot of work on optimism and pessimism. And here is what he found. What he found was that when it comes to goal setting, pessimists are realistic in terms of their short term goals as well as in terms of their long term goals. That's good thing to be a realistic. Short term goal as well as long term goal realistic. Where as optimists are realistic, sorry, optimists on the other hand, are unrealistic when it comes to their short term goals, but are realistic when it comes to their long term goals. Why is that? Well, let's look at the model again.

So let's take the pessimists first. They have certain goal, and they have low expectations, low levels of beliefs, they don't think they would do well. Low levels of motivation, their mind looks for consistency, and their performance is usually

according to their beliefs and expectations. And the interpretation is, I told you so. I told you I couldn't do well here. And then everyone else in a chorus says, yes, you told us so. How wonderfully realistic of you. But then sometimes a pessimist succeeds beyond his or her expectations. And then what happens? The interpretation is, low

levels of beliefs, so the interpretation is, well, it was lucky, it was because Mars was in front of

Venus, and that only happens once every 50 years, won't happen again. Or, it was my lucky day, or, she just played very poorly today. And then, the mind looking for consistency, they go around that loop again and again, and then become realistic once more. Unsuccessfully realistic, but realistic. So they're realistic in the short term as well as in the long term.

Let's look at the optimist now. The optimist starts with high levels of beliefs, high levels of expectations, motivation, incredibly high. The mind looking for consistency, performance, not so good, not as good as the expectations were. In other words, unrealistic. However, the interpretation, because of high levels of beliefs, the subjective interpretation is, OK, so, what if I learn from it? This is an opportunity; I've actually got better this time. What if I learn? And they still have high levels of

beliefs and high levels of expectations. Motivation is high, the mind looks for consistency, they perform, still not good, not as good as they expected, unrealistic.

But the interpretation, still, what if I learn from it? I've gone even better this time.

I've shown what doesn't work. And they continue. But then comes the quarrels from the outside and says, —come on, really, why can't you be realistic like your good brother or sister, the pessimist. ||

But they believed that they can do it, and they continue to persist and to work hard again and again. 5 times, 10 times, sometimes 5000 even 10000 times, until they bring the —unrealistic reality || and make it realistic to match their beliefs over time. So even though in the short term, the reality may not match, I may run the mile for the

next 10 years in 4 minutes and 12 seconds or 4 minutes and 2 seconds. But I'll get there eventually and make my unrealistic —expectations || and goals realistic. Through a lot of failure, through a lot of hard work, through a lot of persistence.

What Seligman shows about optimism and pessimism is not that it's not just some

pollyannaish feel-good, you know conceive and believe, kind of approach. Rather, it's

about how we interpret events.

So for example, how do I interpret my failure? As end of the story, catastrophe, give it up? Or as an opportunity for success? So he distinguishes, and we'll talk about it more next time, he distinguishes between interpreting an event as permanent or temporary. I just didn't create light from electricity, so that could mean, well, it's not possible and I'll never do it or it could mean, well, this is another step towards success:

showing what doesn't work. I've just being turned down from a job that I wanted, well, it means

I'll never find a job or that's a temporary setback. Let's see what I can learn. Let's see how I can hone my search and find, eventually, my ideal position. It's also about being pervasive or specific. Pessimists look at things that's being... the negatives, being pervasive. Well, I'm just not a good scientist versus... well,

I just wasn't able to get this experiment right this time. Or if I get a poor grade on an exam, I'm just stupid. Pervasive, everything, all or nothing. Versus I just didn't do well here on this specific exam. What can I learn from it and how can I do better

next time. This is what optimism and pessimism is. And it can be learned. A lot of research in this area...showing how learning to interpret events subjectively as optimists leads to much higher success. Some of you may recognize Matt Biondi.

1988 Seoul Olympics. Many people thought that he could equal Mark Spitz records of seven gold medals. First race, silver medal. Huge disappointment. Second race, bronze medal. Huge disappointment. Everyone I remembered that very distinctly. People talking about how he falls under pressure, how he is not the person we thought he is. Martin Seligman at that point said "no, he's going to succeed" Why? Because he measured him and many other athletes on their levels of optimism and pessimism. And Matt Biondi was a constant optimist.

silver medals in the Olympics, failures, right? But these relative for him expected to win seven golds, failures, he would interpret them not as permanent. —I choke. I can't make it in the Olympics || as pervasive —I can't swim well anymore and win || to temporary and specific, which he did exactly that and won the next five gold medals. Surprising many people, not Seligman and his research team who knew exactly what his interpretation style would be following these —failures ||. Also it associated with social and physical mental health. For example, our immune system, psychological and physical immune system is actually stronger as a result of being optimists.

Resilience levels, a lot of research by Karen Reivich shows that if you teach people to interpret things positively, optimistically, they are much more likely to succeed. Those of you who are interested in more about this, her book, *The Resilience Factor*, Karen Reivich, fantastic book, where she talks about programs implemented where within a few weeks kids are immune to the experience of depression two years hence...

People who learn to be optimistic and she teaches them in a short period as two weeks compare that to the five years of the Cambridge Summerville Study. Within as little as two weeks, people who were taught optimistic interpretation style become happier, those who learn it are eight times less likely to experience depression. Eight times less likely to experience depression, if you simply learn a different interpretation style. I haven't failed 5000 times; I've succeeded in showing what doesn't work. So what if I didn't do well now, I will do better next time or the time after that. People who learn to interpret things more positively actually live longer. And we'll talk about some of this research. You'll read about a bit of it, the Nun Study

and so on. People who interpret things positively or more optimistic actually live longer. Now that does not mean that all pessimists die young and all optimists die old. That's just one of the factors that goes into the equation, there's many other things. You know, you don't want, there is also unrealistic optimism that we'll talked about it

—and smokes, you know, 120 cigarettes a day would probably not live to 120.

So it's not just about the belief, but a lot of it is. And finally, as I mentioned time and again, it can be learned, and we'll talk about how it can be learned and how we can learn, and you'll do it whether it's in your response paper, not for this week, but for the next week, as well as in sections, as well as by yourselves. A technique that can be learned and can have all these positive effects. Okay. There's a problem here though. You know, how do I distinguish between this and realistic optimism and

unrealistic optimism. Detached optimism that is advocated in for example for self-help movement. Is everything that I think of I achieve and conceive and becomes a reality? Is my self-concept my destiny and my only destiny? Or is there such a thing as unrealistic beliefs? And there is such a thing as unrealistic beliefs. Here is an example. Her name was Rena, she was a showgirl, at least to me, she was. Rena and I had a great deal in common. We were both in our teens, I was twelve. She was fourteen. We both were in our fives. She was 5'6. I was 5'1.

I was in love with Rena. Rena too was in love with herself. Now just as a side note, I have a wonderful mother, and amazing mother who believes in me. And in fact when the three of us. We were three brothers and sisters would come home from school. We would very often talked to our mom about everything that was going on in school, good and bad. So I came home after I realized that I was truly and madly in love with Rena and that she was the one for me. I came home and talked to my mom

about it. And I told her, — Mom, I love her so. || So she said, || what's the problem? || And

I explained to her that she was older than I was and all the big boys in the school were interested in her, that she was much taller than I was. And my mother believed in me and went on self-fulfilling prophecy campaign. And though she had never read Napoleon Hill, she said to me, "Tal, whatever you conceive, whatever you believe, you can achieve." And though she had never read Branden, she said to me, "Tal, your

self-concept is destiny. And Rena is your destiny." And she told me that if I truly, truly believed that I could, that Rena would want me. She really would want me. And my mom inspired me and made me believe in myself.

So I went ahead to approach Rena, and I prepared for it. I really prepared for it. Though I wasn't shaving at that time, I put on aftershave. And I continued. I can do it. I know I can. And I approach Rena, but then the music stopped. And though I had very high expectations, and though I envisioned success. I closed my eyes and I saw

myself succeeding. She was not interested. She didn't want me. However, however, we became very good friends. In fact so good that she would tell me about all her shallow and tall boyfriends. Now when my mom told me that she really believed in it, that she thought I was ,you know that she told me this in Yiddish and she said

—foreign language || which means in Yiddish —you're a big find. || I was really my, you know, really, I was my Jewish mother's kosher Pygmalion. So bad, yeah. You know, that took me a lot of time to think about, you'd better appreciate it. But...thank you, thank you. But it didn't work. And again, don't get me wrong, I'm very grateful to my mom. I literally had 24/7 Marva Collins in my house. I owe so much to my mom.

However, in this case, it probably was not the realistic belief. So what is realistic? How do we identify what is realistic and what is not? Here are some ideas to help us do so. The Stockdale paradox. It's about finding the tension, reconciling the tension and it's not easy. Again, I'm not going to give you a formula now to tell you: OK, here is...calculate this, and if it's above seven, go ahead with green; below seven, probably not so. There is no formula. But here is, just a heuristic, something to think

about when you think about beliefs.

James Stockdale was admiral. James Stockdale was the highest ranking prisoner of war in the... in the Vietnam War. And he started to notice a phenomenon. He was there for years. Eventually got out and live to tell the tale many others did not. And he

saw many people survive, many people not survive. The very harsh conditions of the prisoner. What he was that the people who survived had two characteristics. First of all, they believed that they would get out, they had faith that one day they would be free. They would get to see their family, their friends. And this faith kept them going. At the same time, and this is the second component, they had realistic beliefs and evaluation of the situation. If any one of these two components were missing, they were unlikely to survive. If they didn't have faith and they didn't believe it they

would survive, they were very likely to die in the harsh conditions. On the other hand, if they thought that they would get out by this coming Christmas, and really believed that they would get out by this coming Christmas, they were also less likely to survive.

Because they didn't get out by this coming Christmas, and then they were desponded,

resigned, helpless, and very often, they died. So it was the two components, believe that you would get out, but at the same time know that you need to deal with reality and that it's tough.

Here is what James Stockdale said, —you must never confuse faith that you would prevail in the end which you can never afford to lose with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts

of your current reality whatever they might be. || Realistic optimism. Now the thing is that you may be wrong at times. And sometimes you may really believe in something, and believe it that you have realistic expectations and not succeed. But as we talked about...And as we'll talk about in a few minutes, it doesn't matter that much. Because even if we don't success we just bounce back up. And continue working hard. The key though is as much as possible, to attain this balance. What Maslow calls The Graceful Integration between high level of beliefs and connection to reality. No prescription here. But just a heuristic, something to keep in mind. Positive thinking is not THE secret. Yes, it's part of the secret. Yes, it's part of the success formula. Yes, it's part of the happiness formula. But it's not all. False optimism sooner or later means disillusionment, anger and hopelessness. Here is the

secret of success. This is the secret proven by research. Thousand of years of research and successful people in different cultures, in different places and in different ages. It's optimism, passion and hard work. It'll be very hard for you to find successful men

and women through out history who did not have all three. Optimism, belief, faith that they can do well, that they can succeed. Passion, love for what they were doing. And hard work.

There is no substitute for hard work as Edison said. These 3 components. The

secret...simple, straightforward. You know it all. Remember what I said during 2nd class. I'm not going to teach you much new. I hope to remind you what you already know. Optimism, passion and hard work. Does luck play a role? Absolutely. Jefferson,

—I am a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the luckier I get. || There is actually science behind luck. And you' ll read about it in the Luck Factor. Where people who have these 3 components, who believe they can do well, who love

what they do and work hard, actually find more luck. In the words of Thoreau in

Common Hours. Okay, so why don't all the parents teach us to have high expectations? If it's so good for us, if it's related to success, to happiness, to physical well-being, why don't all our parents just say to us whatever we work, you can succeed, you can do it. If you dream about it, you can do it. Why did very often parents and people who

care about us lower our expectations? Because they are concerned about our happiness. They are concerned about our self esteem. You see, there is a lot of belief...People believe that high expectations naturally lead to disappointment. So...high expectations lead to disappointment. And it sounds right.

I mean, this is the formula that was written in the 19th century by William James. He said that self-esteem is equal to our success over pretensions. In other words, our achievement... how much

we succeed, how much we achieve over what we pretend or what we aspire to, what our goals are. In other words, if we have high expectations,

high pretensions, we are much more likely to hurt our self-esteem. For example, let's say my aspiration, my pretension, my expectation is to make 4 thousand dollars a month. Again this...I just throw in a numeric example here because it's easier to understand. Let's say my hope is to make 4 thousand dollars a month. That's my

pretension. But in fact what I end up making is 2 thousand dollars a month. According to William James' formula, my self-esteem, and as we know self-esteem and happiness are very highly co-related and related. My self-esteem, my happiness level according to this formula is a half. On the other hand, let's say my pretensions, my

expectation is to make 1.5 thousand dollars a month and in fact I make 1.5 thousand dollars a month. According to this formula, my self-esteem, my happiness level is 1.

So here even though I'm making less, again I'm using a numeric example here, you can think about other examples. Even though I'm actually making less here, my self-esteem and my happiness are higher. So lower your expectations. Not so. What was found in the last 35 years of research is that this formula is actually wrong. That's not the case. Here is how it actually works. Let's say we have a graph. And this is time. And here is my self-esteem levels and happiness levels. And let's start off around my base level which is here. And then I had a mid-term in Positive Psych. And I don't do as well as I expected to. What happens to my self-esteem? What happens to my happiness? Of course it'll go down. It's natural we all want to succeed or most people want to succeed.

So it goes down if it's below my expectations but very quickly as the research by Daniel Gilbert shows on effective forecasting... very quickly we go back up to our base level of happiness. And then a week later I have another mid-term in say, maths

55. And I ace it. I get much higher grade than I expected. And what happens to my self-esteem and happiness? It goes up. But then very quickly it goes back down again. And then let's say I'm 12 years old and I walk down the street and I meet Rena and I

ask her out. And she says no. What happens to my self-esteem and happiness? It goes down. Slightly. And then very quickly it goes back up again. And then lucky me. I walk down the street. I think I see Rena but there is something different about her. And it turns out she has a twin sister. And I ask her out. And she says no. And what happens once again? Slightly down. But then I recover and go back up again.

And you won't believe it. They are identical triplets. And I meet the 3rd sister and she

says yes. She says I love you too. And what happens to my self-esteem and happiness? It goes up slightly right? Even taller than this. But then very quickly back down to base level and so

on and so on. The vicissitudes of life...

whether I get tenured or not tenured, whether I win the lottery or lose money. The ups and downs around a base level of well-being. Now there is good news here and there is bad news here. The good news is I can take more risks. It's not the end of world if she says no. It's not the end of the world if I fail here or if I don't get my dream job. It's okay. I'll recover. We all do. So that's the good news. The bad news is...so I'm stuck? So I was born with this base level according to my genes and I can't

really improve? How do I raise this base level of happiness? And it's possible. And we'll talk about... the whole course is about raising the base level of happiness. But here is one finding from specifically the research on self-esteem. On one thing you can do right now when you get out of class to raise self-esteem and that is to cope as opposed to avoid. To cope meaning to put yourself on the line. To take risks not when you're in your panic zone but when you're in your stretch zone. To risk failure. To handle things, to deal things, to confront things that are important to you. To try out for that play. To speak out in session if you haven't. To go out to a place where you

really want to go but never really try. To try. Because people who cope overtime have the same or sometimes more ups and downs. But their ups and downs look like this. Still ups and downs. Permission to be human. But the base level increases. Why does the base level increase? I'm gonna end here. Why does the base level increase when

we cope rather than avoid?

For 3 reason. First self perception theory. Daryl Bem... I think from either Dartmouth or Cornell... what Daryl Bem showed was that we derived conclusion about ourselves in the same way that we derived conclusion about others. So for example if I see a person going up to people and initiating a conversation or speaking up in session or trying out for a play and trying again and again. My conclusion about this person is this person is courageous. This person must have high self-esteem. And

I may derive the conclusion about myself in exactly the same way. By seeing myself behaving a certain way, I reach a conclusion about my self-esteem or benevolence or generosity or whatever it is. Self perception theory. And if I cope, if I try things out then I see that this is a person with courage. This is a person who tries. And my conclusion about myself would be I must have high self-esteem. And

my self-esteem as well as happiness level overtime will actually increase. Self perception theory. We derive conclusion about ourselves in the same way we derive conclusion about others. Meaning by looking at behavior. When we fail after coping we realize that the actual pain that comes with failure is far less than the pain we

imagine and that we associate with failure. I just got over it. Okay, so I didn't do well in here or she said no. but I got over it. Whereas I imagine it in my mind I think it'll

last forever. Just like those tenured or not tenured professors thought that their pay will last forever whereas it goes away. So when I realize the pain of actual failure is far less than the pain associated with failure, I become more confident. I can handle it.

I'm actually much more resilient than I thought I was. And my self-esteem increases.

My happiness as a result increases too. And finally there is more success because there is no other way to succeed. There is no other way in terms of learning how to walk. There is no other way in terms of succeeding in art or in science or in business or in politics. Learn to fail or fail to learn. I'll see you on Thursday.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 7

Is finish up with the beliefs of self-fulfilling prophecy lecture and move on to the lecture on focus and how focus creates reality. Where did we end last time? We ended by talking about Rena and other things. We talked about the model, the Dan Gilbert model, the Philip Brickman model, where after a failure or a success there is a spike up, spike down, but then we recover. And we basically move along a base level of well being through out our lives, with the ups and downs, the vicissitudes. The question then became, or rather there was good news and bad news. we can take more risks, we can put ourselves on the line more. Failure usually, not all failures, but usually is just a temporary decline in our wellbeing level, self esteem level, and then every quickly we jump up again. you know, why should we put any effort into our wellbeing? And the answer to that, and the whole course essentially is an answer to that.

How can we raise that base level? One of the things is coping, putting ourselves on the line. And the reason why coping, why putting ourselves on the line yields positive results in terms of the base level of wellbeing going up, meaning still the ups and downs, but ups and downs looking this way as opposed to around a straight line or a parallel line is that when we cope, we see ourselves coping, we see ourselves trying and through self perception theory, we derive certain conclusions about ourselves: oh, I must be courageous; oh, I must be a person who has high self esteem; oh, I must be a person who has a strong desire to succeed and so on and so on. And then we derive conclusions about ourselves in the same way that we derive conclusions about other people. That is self-perception theory. The second reason is that once we started failing more often, The pain that in our minds we associate with failure is far greater than the actual pain of failure when that comes. Maybe not initially when it happens, but after a while; and then we recover again, and we see, oh,

I can deal with it, I must be a person with resilience. And finally, there is more success as a result of coping. Learn to fail, for fail to learn, there is no other way to succeed.

So what I want to move on to now and just finish up on is how do we become more of an

optimistic. So we talked about the virtues, we talked about longevity, people who are optimistic actually live longer. We talked about higher levels of success, higher levels of happiness, more likely to overcome depression. People who are optimistic are eight times less likely to be depressed; they are much more likely to be happy. And again, optimism as an interpretation style, not as a Pollyannaish feel-good kind of approach. So how do we become more of an optimism? I want to talk about three techniques. First is to take action, to just do it, to put ourselves on the line. visualization, many of you are familiar with that, especially athletes as, as a technique. And finally, cognitive therapy, which at least according to research, is the most successful, most effective therapeutic intervention out there today, So let me begin with action, this is based on research by Albert Bandura, his concept basically the idea of having strong beliefs and he just made it more academic, more scientific and researched for many years and we talked about many benefits of self efficacy.

What Bandura is coming out against in much of his work is what has become known as the self esteem movement, what has become known as feel good movement. Alright, so tell a child how great they are, how wonderful they are. Standing in front of a mirror every morning and tell yourself: hi, gorgeous ten times, and then you will be more successful, it actually hurts in the long term, it actually hurts self esteem it actually hurts the motivation of students who are constantly told you are wonderful, you are terrific no matter what. how we can praise in the right way when we talked about the work of Carol Dweck on mindsets in a few weeks. In the meantime, what Bandura showed, what Carol Dweck showed, very often, its even detrimental to just give the, you know, positive, positive talk, the positive affirmation. Whether it comes

from the outside or from the inside, What Bandura is saying, that rather than talk, we need action. We need to put hard work into whatever it is, we want to be more confident about, and we need to cope. We need to put ourselves on the line. Very simple! Why? Because hard work and coping inevitably leads to success, more success at least than we had before, that success contributes to our self-efficacy, to our self confidence.

And then, that self confidence in turns, in turn motivates us to work harder. We started to believe ourselves more. Now, this is a very simple model, I mean, anyone you know, the five year old could draw that model. However think about the implications for our lives, think about the implications for education, make them actually work hard so that they succeed more, so that they see themselves going back to self conception theory, see themselves working hard, see themselves putting themselves on the line, coping and failing, and getting up again. It works also in a similar way to our physical immune system. You know when we get sick, when we get ill, our body sense anti-bodies and we actually become immune to whatever it is that we had. So our body become immunize through failure. Same on the psychological level, failure is underrated. You know one of the things that I wish for you, and I mean it genuinely.

One of the things that I wish for you is that you fail more. And, coupled with that, I hope that

when you fail, you will also learn to interpret it in a different way than most of us usually interpret failure. there is no other way for growth, we will talk about it much more when we talk about perfectionism. A healthy life, a real life, and a happy life ultimately looks like this, a spiral with ups and downs, not as a straight line. When we see ourselves cope, when we see ourselves work hard, we derive conclusions about ourselves, our self confidence goes up, our motivation goes up, our belief goes up and so on and so on in an upward spiral of growth. that comes

inevitably when we cope, when we try, when we have high expectations. Not to dare is to lose oneself, Because this model also works the other way around. When we constantly avoid challenges, when we constantly shone difficult experiences, a downward spiral is created, in terms of our self esteem, in terms of our success, in terms of our well being.

Second technique: imagining success. especially last time was a real milestone in our relationship. or potential clients in the future. I get really nervous before lectures. I get very nervous, in fact for me, whenever I stand in front of a large audience, when I talk about large audience its anything above five. So, this is a real challenge, And this is been a challenge since the dash I decided that I want to be a teacher and I decided that I want to be a teacher when I heard Marva Collins, and I said: this is my calling. And here is what happened then. I said, how can I be a successful teacher and effective teacher if I get so nervous when I stand in front of an audience?

And remember the three components of success, the secret of success? It was optimism, believe in oneself; it was passion, loving what you do; and it was hard work. So I had two of the three components. I worked extremely hard, in fact my motto has become, one that I got from Professor Richard Hackman, as my thesis advisor as an undergrad here. and what he said when he goes into a classroom is the following: prepare, prepare, prepare, and then be spontaneous. So I followed his advise, now I read over my notes, I have all the notes written down and then I can let go. So I prepare a lot, I have the hard work, not a problem. I have the passion, I love learning, But I lacked the third thing, I lacked optimism, and I lacked confidence. And then I asked myself: how can I raise the third components because it is important component of wellbeing, remember the research on athletes? 56% of the variance is accounted of success, is accounted for by the sense of optimism or belief in yourself. Remember the John Carter study? Twenty years along when you look at Harvard

Business School graduates, one of the two components that differentiated the most successful from the rest, one of them was belief in themselves, confidence.

So what did I do? I went back and thought about what happened when I played squash, what my coaches used to teach me, and that was visualization. And I started reading up and it actually started off centuries ago in religious practices, was brought to athletics through east European athletes who would imagine themselves, say, running around the track and then standing on the

podium, receiving the gold medal. And more and more psychologists started to implement it. Sales people use it very effectively, seeing themselves actually striking the deal, going through with it, doing it and succeeding. And that made it much more likely to come true. Why is it so important? Why is it so good? Why is it so effective? Why it being used so widely and successfully? And the answer goes back to the structure of our brains. This is research done by the head of psychology department, Professor Steven Kosslyn. What he shows was that when we see something, There are certain neurons in my brain that are firing, that actually take on the shape of this hand. My visual cortex, the back. Now, the exact same neurons are firing.

In other words, my brain does not know the difference between the real thing and the imaginary thing. Which explains why dreams can be so vivid, in the middle of the night, pitch dark, and you are dreaming about mid of the day, walking around the yard. Our imagination, least for the brain is no different than the real thing. Now, when I imagine success, what happens in a sense is that this is the real thing. between the real thing and the imaginary thing. Now if I imagine success over and over again in my mind, remember what the mind does not like is inconsistency. In other words, if I create success in my imagination and I persist with it, not just visualize it once or twice, but over and over again, And therefore, it will bring up the external reality to match this internal schema. the difference in the real thing and imaginary thing. Just

like Thomas, just like Roger Bannister run the four minutes a mile and after that, after that what happened was that everyone had a different schema: Oh, four minutes a mile is possible and 37 runners run it, over 300 runners run it the following year. Because they had a difference schema: we can do exactly the same thing through the simulator.

In the real thing and the imaginary thing. but it works a great deal. What I do every time when I give a lecture is visualize. I imagine myself stand in front of the audience, calm, excited, passionate. And then when I go into the real thing, When I go into the real thing, I do feel that. I still get nervous, I still get anxious, Raising my levels of beliefs, levels of confidence by practicing, would practice in a simulator before they take you on across the Atlantic. The mind as a simulator, this is why it works. The key here, this is a mistake that many people make, a lot of the self-help books that talked about visualizations. The key is to focused not just on the destination, Shelley Taylor, UCLA, did this research where she divided students in two random groups One student imaging themselves getting an A on the exam and imagine it over and over again. The second group, imaging themselves getting an A but also saw themselves work and persist in the library, prepare for it, and then, get to that final A. The second group that imaging both the journey and the destination was much more successful, much better result in the exam. So visualize the journey as well as the destination, this is your response paper for this week, to visualize both your destination of getting there, your journey of getting there, as well as the destination itself. Arguably, the most, or certainly one of the most influential Why?

Because beyond its beauty, its rhythm and its importance, it also captures what it means, what it

means to create an image of success. Cause this is what he did for this country and defined generations to come. So first of all, I want to read some excerpts from it. It is about visualizing a better future, He says:

—I have a dream, I say to you today my friends, so even though we face the

difficulties of today and tomorrow I still have a dream. This is all about imagination, but through the imagination he created a better reality. Look at how he talks about the process; we want equality at the end. ||

He talks about how we will get to this outcome. So let me read you a couple of excerpts: —This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off let's not just sit here and wait and imagine that things will happen, And he says explicitly: —In the process

of gaining our rightful place, —We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline. We must not allow —Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights Another thing that we need to do when we imagine success is to make it as real as possible by involving as many senses as we can. Why? Because the more senses we can imagine, the more our mind is fooled to believe that it is the real thing. Once again, Martin Luther King does this beautifully. Let me read you a few excerpts: —We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters I mean, you can feel the water, you can feel that stream, you can see it, you can visualize it. —Or, let us

not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom People connect to it, making it real, concrete.

—One day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with I mean, you can see that circle of the kids holding hand, again making it real, you can visualize it, you see it. By the way, these are the characteristics of all great speeches. They are not abstract, look at the great communicator Ronald Reagan.

Look at Kennedy. They gave amazing speeches because they created a picture, they involve the senses, they created a picture of success.

—I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, weltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed You can actually feel the heat, This is what makes good, successful images. This is what makes great speeches. you wanna really be excited about what you are doing, or else

it will fall flat. Nothing, no change will happen. Again, the connection between the words emotion and motion: without emotion, there is no motion. If you want to move yourself or others, you need to evoke emotions.

—From every mountain side, let freedom ring! And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania Let freedom ring

from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring. And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, —Free at last! Free at last! Imagine if you

said at the end:

Free at last! Free at last! God Almighty, free at last! Would that have the same effect? Boring, dry, you have to evoke emotions to create motion, whether is in our imagination or in a speech to the nation the third technique. So the first one was: work, put yourself on the line, cope, invest. The second: use your imagination, use the simulator that you have right here, one of the most if not the most powerful simulator we know of. The third is cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapy has been used very successfully over the last, over forty years, Martin Seligman was one of the founders of the cognitive therapy approach. He studied with, with Beck, who was the official founder of this technique in this approach. And what cognitive therapy is about is the following. Its basic premise is that thoughts drive emotion.

So for example: there is an external event. I perceive that event, and what I do then after I perceive that event, there is evaluation of that event, in other words, a thought about that event. And then, as a result of that thought, that evokes an emotion. So for example, an event, a lion is running toward me, The emotion: fear, and that of course leads to motion, run away or stand up bravely and fight the lion. Or, another one: I see an event, a gorgeous woman walking down the street, my evaluation: oh, it's my gorgeous wife, and the emotion: love. Event ,evaluation, thought, emotion, and then that leads to action. What cognitive therapy says is that if we want to change emotions where we need to intervene is here, is that the level of evaluation and the level of thought.

And if we can change that, we also change our emotion. Specifically, what cognitive therapy saying is that we need to restore sense of rationality, a very important try out coming up and I get nervous. Cognitive therapy is not saying stop feeling nervous, But what it is saying is that sometimes our thoughts are irrational, and immediately I classified myself as stupid or the fact that I will never succeed in tests again. Or, you know, I asked someone out and he says no, and suddenly nobody wants me. That event led to an irrational thought, irrational evaluation of the situation.

It was just once, it was temporary, and that led to difficult emotions such as resignation: nobody will ever want me again. And what cognitive therapy does is just restore but, you know they are, what? 3200 other men at Harvard. Cognitive therapy has been shown to be extremely

effective, more effective than any of the other intervention, the jury still out when it comes to extreme cases of psychopathology, but in terms of most psychopathologies, most anxiety, most depression, it has been shown to be the most successful, and it works the fastest. Not the only thing that works, but it works the best and much more promptly than the other interventions.

On the whole, not right for everyone, but for most people. And finally, and this is

the important thing we can learn it. So we talk about right? The five-year Cambridge Somerville study that failed. Well, Karen Reivich teaches these cognitive skills in a two week program. And that two week program helps kids in inner cities, at risk population, reduce the likelihood of falling into the trap of depression, of drug abuse, increases the likelihood of wellbeing and success in the long term just as a result of two weeks teaching them cognitive therapy or these techniques, and this is the important thing about it. and you are going to apply it in the next two, next two classes, but you need to do more than that.

So let me share with you a summary of cognitive therapy And what I did there was to put together essentially the work of Karen Reivich whom I just mentioned, the work of Martin Seligman, and the work of David Burns. Some of you may heard of him, The Feeling Good Handbook, who is also a student of Aaron Beck. So this is putting together their work into 3Ms subdivided each into 2 suggestions. you could usually relate to one or tow of the 3Ms. Things that you do yourself. So beyond the lookout ask yourself: —Where do I distort the reality? Where do I have distortion in

terms of evaluation? That lead to certain negative emotions that are unnecessary, because if I restore rationality I will not feel the same emotion to the same degree. So ask yourself when you look through the 3Ms. The 3Ms...essentially the 3 traps of irrational thoughts.

The first one is magnifying. you know induction is something very natural. A kid sees this and will call it a stool and then they see another stool in the bar when they go out at the age of one and then they see another stool. After they see 20 stools they begin to form a concept they induce that this is a stool. And now they see one even one that they have never seen before they know what it is. Just like I see a person in the street whom I never encounter before I know this is a person, because I induce from all the other events that happened before that this is also a person.

But sometimes we take this too far and we over generalize. Here is a student. Over generalization, the evaluation, the thought, irrational. Or he just said no to me. Everyone is gonna say no. not seeing failure as an opportunity, as a stepping stone but seeing it as the end of the world. Not finding a job ever. All or Nothing. Either straight As or complete failure. from putting ourselves on the line. The other side of it, which is actually other side of the same coin is minimizing. This is something I do very often. This is my trap that I still have to be aware of, I still think about today, even though I became aware of it years ago.

Only now I catch myself doing it much promptly. So the first idea of minimizing is what Karen Reivich calls tunnel vision. And out of these 620 students 618 are engaged in the material. One is looking at the ceiling, at the lights. And another one, out of the 620 students, is asleep. Tunnel Vision is when I focus on that one person who is asleep. And I say to myself, "Wow, I'm giving boring, sleep inducing lectures." Or the other way around: I have 620 students, 618 are asleep. what cognitive therapy does is bring realism into the equation. Again this is something I often fall into. I know many of you saw the Jon Stewart show. still contemplating and thinking and saying So I fell behind and I felt slow. And I also said something that I later regretted. It was just one sentence. No big deal. But that is what I focus on. You know I flew home after. I went back to Israel. The whole flight that what I was thinking of. Ignoring the other things. You know the fact that 2 hours after the Jon Stewart show, the book became a best seller. Completely ignore that. It was just that one sentence. How could I say it? And I zoomed out. I looked at the bigger picture. so many of your friends have watched and enjoyed it. It was a great opportunity. I looked at the bigger picture.

Gave myself the permission to be human. To regret it. But then overall, I could see it in a much more rational light than before. In the past, it would take me months

to get over this one sentence. Whereas now, zoom out. Evaluation thought, irrational. And recover much more promptly. Dismissal of positives or negatives. So the person who are engaged or asleep. The person who dismiss the positives see those how I just failed or what I just did wrong. So for example, When I was a senior, I applied for fellowships and I got a fellowship to go to Cambridge. And I got the John Elliot Fellowship. And there are 4 fellowships that go to Cambridge: then there is the John Harvard fellowship. So I got the John Elliot, one of the 4. Immediately when I got it, I know that I got it obviously. Now there is no difference between them except for the names. that was very important experience for me because I said the importance and the power of our evaluation. And how that can determine or even ruin what should have been a celebration. But once we recognize it, once we understand it, we can dispute it. We can challenge it. We can reframe it and see the positive as well.

Making up or fabricating the 3rd M. This is when we create something ex nihilo, from nothing. So for example, we personalize it or we blame. We see this very often with people who are abused. So an abused wife will very often say Instead of rationally saying It can also be the other way around. You know, I just did poorly on an exam and I blame my boyfriend or girlfriend for it. You got to remember Nathaniel Branden. No one is coming. Take responsibility rather than blame. One of the key ideas that Marva Collins communicates to her students.

And finally, emotional reasoning. I am envious; therefore I must be a bad person. before a tryout therefore it must be dangerous. Taking an emotion and making it into reality whereas instead of understanding an emotion is an emotion, it is my evaluation of reality. correcting for the track, correcting for these errors. Or feeling that, and because I feel that, my evaluation of it is, well, I

must really be second-rate and no good, instead having the rational belief of, well, let me try out, let me see how things go, correcting the distortions. The key, once again, is to get real. How do we get real

through the questions that we ask? I am going to give you just a few examples here;

you are going to practice with those on your own. But here are just some of them.

First of all, is my conclusion tied to reality? Second, is it rational? They are interconnected. Am I ignoring something important? Like the fact that---you know the book did well afterwards--- like the fact that there are other cool guys in 1504, and so on. What important evidence do I still need to take into consideration? there are also children on the bus. And this is what questions do. They open us up, they open our vision and they create in your reality. What am I magnifying? What am I minimizing? Am I falling into the traps? Am I ignoring anything that is going well? Am I ignoring anything that is not going well? What is the big picture. To conclude, Ed Diener and Martin Seligman did very important research on extremely happy people. This is tip of the stamp research. Looking at the 10 per cent of the happiest people out there, people that we can learn from. And what they found was very interesting.

First of all, these people did not experience painful emotions any less times than the rest of the people, say the bottom 10 per cent or the mid 10 per cent. They experience painful emotions, the difference between them and the rest was that they recovered more promptly as a result of different interpretations. So when they felt down, they were optimistic instead of saying What can I learn from it? What happen? And then they recovered more promptly than the pessimists, the people who remained depressed for a much longer time. You see, events happen, things happen in the world, very often out of our control. And some of the events are bad, some are negative. What matters more is what we do with them after, how we evaluate them. And what happens is that our evaluation becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and believes our self-fulfilling prophecies.

If I believe that it will last for six months, And what we do with our beliefs is we create a downward spiral of depression, unhappiness, sadness or an upward spiral,

capitalizing positive emotions and having more and more of them, what Barbara Fredrickson talks about There are no short cuts. There are no easy steps to wellbeing, to success, to high level of beliefs in ourselves. and then we are all set, we are all inoculated for the rest of our lives. If you want to continue working, we have to continue working at it. Because just like if we focus on specific element of an event or not makes a difference, it applies on the macro level to our entire life. What I am going to do now is elaborate, go up higher level of the spiral of understanding and learning, of something that we have talked about time and again.

Ed Diener, who is also, I just mentioned his research, he is also the president, first president of the International Positive Psychology Association, it appears that the way people perceive the world is much more important to happiness than objective circumstances. Now if you think about it, that makes a lot of sense. We know a lot of people who seemingly have everything, all their dreams have come true, and they are still miserable. While there are people who have very little, who have experienced hardship after hardship and who never cease to celebrate life. Then there are people who have everything going for them and really appreciate it, what matters more is the internal. Happiness is not contingent on our status, or the state of our bank account, on what we choose to focus on. Because our emotions are determined by external circumstances as well as internal, interpretation matters.

For example, look at what Edison did, 5,000 failures to the external observer, for him the evaluation was very different. The internal evaluation, the subjective evaluation, Do we celebrate successes or take it for granted? Do we perceive failures and hardships as a disaster or as an opportunity for growth? Emerson: And Shakespeare: but he is to a great extent right. A person in and to derive, and to look at the positive in that situation. Same for a person living in a concentration camp. So there are external circumstances that matter. A person, a homeless person, you know,

if you give them enough money for a home, for food, for basic education, of course they will become happier because of the change of external circumstances. However, beyond the basic needs, beyond the basic freedoms, it is mostly about how we perceive reality, and we are able to make it into a heaven or a hell. So I have a question for you: how many geometric shapes?

Remember this, how you created your reality just based on the question that you asked. We think when we look at the picture, you know not everyone of course is looking on the children on the bus on the clock, right? most of you, did not see it, because it is a question of focus. Very often we complain about life and we think, you know, things are terrible and awful not realizing and then beliefs become self-fulfilling prophecies, or, because we just focus on what is not working. And one thing and this does not mean that there are no objective terrible circumstances out there. But to a great extent, a great extent, we co-create our reality. You know one of the students who was in 1504 two years ago recommended this book to me--- you know coincidentally this parable, so I want to read it to you The story that Dan Millman, the author, tells: I met him on a construction site in the Middle West.

When the lunch whistle blew, all the workers would sit down together to eat. And everyday Sam would open his lunch pail and start to complain. —not peanut butter and jelly sandwich again! He whined about his peanut butter and jelly sandwiches day after day after day, until one of the guys in the work crew finally said: —Sam, if you hate peanut butter and jelly so much, You know, very often we make our own sandwiches the questions that we ask determine our

reality: a peanut sandwich, or

geometric shapes, or children on the bus, or salami, whatever it is. We very often create our own reality. And if we understand this, we can transform, change the way that we perceive, change our focus, change our questions, whether it's questions disputing irrational evaluations, and questions create a new reality.

There are essentially two archetypes that I would like to discuss here, two archetypes that capture in many ways how we can cognitively reconstruct, enhance, create our reality. The two archetypes are the benefit-finder and the fault-finder. First of all, the fault-finder, the fault-finder is a person on the peanut butter and jelly, on things that are not going well on problems in the relationship, on problem in him or herself, problems with the job--the consummate complainer. Now, we all exist on the continuum of between extreme fault-finding and extreme benefit-finding. You know there is no one who is all the way on the extreme this way or that way, everyone is on somewhere on the continuum. from the fault-finding toward the benefit-finding, because there are many benefits to it that I'll discuss later.

The fault-finder, I got the name from the work of Henry David Thoreau, the fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. The extreme fault-finder experiences resignation, learned helplessness. Why? Because he or she begins to really believe that the terrible reality is very much out there independent of what he or she thinks, not recognizing that they create that reality, they begin to believe that no matter what they do, no matter what job they find they have a terrible boss, no matter what partners they have they are always awful and inconsiderate, no matter what restaurant they go to the service is always awful, and they always keep on getting the same peanut butter and jelly sandwich that they made for themselves. And they resigned to the reality and that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of course, their existence. A fault-finder makes lemonade out of lemons, sorry, makes lemon out of lemonade.

The benefit-finder, research Julian Bauer, now at UCLA, the benefit-finder is the opposite, focuses on what works. The benefit-finder looks on the bright side of life, finds the silver lining in the dark cloud, makes lemonade out of lemons, The benefit-finder finds the miracle in the common, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the consummate benefit-finder, focusing on the positive and what works. Now the

problem here may be that the benefit-finder may be detached, this is one of the criticisms of people who always see, you know, the bright side of life, and that is the problem if that is the case.

Again, this class is not advocating focusing only on the positive; its focus is advocating reality. And reality comprises both good and bad, reality comprises both geometric shapes and children on the bus, and the key is to focus on both. So the detachment, the detached benefit-finder is certainly not an archetype that I would advocate nor would it lead to mental health in the

long run. however, we are
co-creator. Let me read you extensively from William James, —Now however fixed

these elements of reality may be, we still have a certain freedom in our dealings with them. Take our sensations, THAT they are is undoubtedly beyond our control; but WHICH we attend to, note, and make emphatic in our conclusions depends on our own interests; and, according as we lay the emphasis here or there, quite different formulations of truth result. We read the same facts differently. So, for an optimist philosopher the universe spells victory, for a pessimist, defeat. What we say about reality thus depends on the perspective into which we throw it.

William James said these back in 1890, understanding how we co-create our reality. Isn't it strange, how princes and kings, and clowns that caper in sawdust rings, and common-people like you and me, are builders for eternity? each is given a list of rules, a shapeless mass and a bag of tools; and each must fashion your life is flown, a stumbling block or a stepping stone. Very often what we get in the beginning is a large piece of stone. What do we do with it? Chipping away the excess stone? Or, is it a barrier to our success? And very often it is up to us, as we co-create our reality. The stone is there, we are not responsible for it; but what we do with it, we are responsible for.

Cognitive reconstruction is about learning to interpret things optimistically, Oin

other words, in the positive light. Ann Harbison, colleague of mine, used to teach also with Philip Stone, Crises have the potential through growth. One of the books that we will talk about when we talk about relationships is *Passionate Marriage* by David Schnarch, who talks about crucibles in marriage. a relationships, not that have been, you know, all fine and dandy for years. These usually fail after a while. But the relationships that go through crucibles, that have crises, disagreements and then, you know, Thesis and Antithesis and then there is a Synthesis, and there is a growth as a result of these hardships. And he says that there is no other way, again learn to fail or fail to learn, there is no other way for a long-term success of a relationship. Relationship does not, cannot look like this. It has to have these ups and downs.

Never let a good crisis in a relationship go to waste, and there are some that could end, and should end a relationship. But most crises can be solved and need to be dealt with. Same on individual level, work by Warren Bennis, he is from USC, taught for a few years here at the Business School, has identified the leading leaders, He has a book called *Geeks & Geezers*, where he talks about the differences between the two leadership styles, approaches, passions, interests and there are numerous differences. For example, you know, the geeks---the younger one talk about work-life balance, You know it was usually, he, a man, worked while the woman took care of the family and the man. So that was for the geezers, for the older generation.

The younger generation, they talk about work-life balance and how they can incorporate all the

elements of their lives. There are of course many more women in the geeks than the geezers. Numerous differences among the generation, one similarity. All the great leaders, whether they were thirty-year-old or eighty-five years old, all of them had been through very rough crucibles and leave to tell the tale. Our most people go through crucibles, but there are certain people who are able to find benefit in these crucibles and grow as a result. Never let a good crisis go to waste, what you are

experiencing. But four years ago or five years ago, when I was still a resident tutor in Leverett house, and we had one of these pre-business events where we talked about the upcoming year and the recruiting and so on. That particular year was a terrible year, Credit Suisse, First Boston they were laying off as well, Deutsche Bank, first time in his history was laying off employees really bad market. And we talked about this, each of us gave it, what should be about the market and what they can do, very sober presentation.

And then one of the students, you know my student Sean Fieldscoy, was a senior then, was sitting there, Had studied positive psychology there. He put up his hand and said: and negative picture, but as a teacher of Positive Psychology few chuckles in the audience and then silence. And everyone is looking at me, And then, I do believe that some people are able to make the best of things that happen, and there is a very big difference here. where people are hiring, where they all come to me on a silver platter and offer me a job. Of course, I would much rather have that. but there are some people who accept the situation and then are able to make the best of it. The same with any crisis. Do you think the leaders, whether they are the eighty- or ninety-year-olds, invited those crucibles into their lives want these crucibles to happen?

Do you think partners go into a relationship and say Of course not! But when it happens, You know, stuff happens, and we can either let it pollute or make fertilizer out of it. I want to show you an example once again of a leader, who is a consummate benefit-finder. [MUSIC] Wow. We are honored to be talking with Neilson Mandela, the former president of South Africa, whose unshakable courage, his faith and integrity have inspired millions to see what is possible in their own lives. on a couple of occasions before and I will tell you, to be in his presence is really, to be in your presence is like being a presence of royalty and grace at the same time. I would think,

I wonder how does a man spend 27 years in prison, put there by an oppressor, and come out of that experience with not a heart of stone, not a cold heart but a heart that is willing to forgive and embrace.

I remember talking to you one night of our dinner, and you had said to me that our hatred for the oppressor was so intense we did not see the value of talking to him. So at what point did you see the value of letting go of that hatred and begin the process of talking? Well, let me say first, that is a great tragedy to spend the best of your lives in prison. But although it looks ironical, there are

advantages in that. I would not be able to achieve the most difficult, a task in life, and that is changing yourself. I would not have an opportunity. I had that opportunity because in prison you have the opportunity to sit down and think, which is an important part. Did you need 27 years of it though? You could have taken a few days, a week, a vacation. Did you need 27 years? Now, did it happen for the best that he spent 27 years of his life?

Certainly when he experienced it, it was painful, it was awful, but he was able to transform this. And to, even in that situation, to see the positive. And when we transform that, those who know the history of what happen to him, when he started to look at the positive, even there are the opportunities in prison when he changes his mind set. In other words, not the external circumstances, the external circumstances actually begin to change. Another benefit-finder, —a pessimist sees difficulty in every

opportunity, I want to end by telling you a story, a personal story about my experiences throughout the years. Some biographical detail, something that most of you did not know. And I am going to tell it to you first from the perspective of the fault-finder. I have a mild case of ADD, it makes things very difficult for me, and I really struggle with it constantly.

When I was in high school, I really wanted to get into a lucrative program in mathematics, did not pass the entry exam, I was very disappointed, I did not make it.

Becoming a professional squash player was a dream for me since the age of 11. That is the thing that I thought about constantly, that was the most important thing for me at the time. I wanna to be a professional player. At the age of twenty, I was about to complete my military service in Israel and I got injured on the squash court and pulled the muscle in my back. The doctor gave me an option of being operated on, which was a big risk, or giving up my professional career. I chose to give up my professional career, a dream that I had from a very young age.

It was a real blow. I went to Cambridge, after graduating from Harvard and I enrolled in a PhD program. I was the only student in my PhD program to fail, I was thrown out of the program. It was humiliating; it seemed like a waste of a year. It was a real tough experience. At Harvard, as a graduate student, I took, with all the other students, my qualifying general exams. Out of all the graduate students who took that exam, I was the only one who failed it. Once again, a really humiliating experience, walking around William James and everyone knows their results, it was tough. Not only that, I was given provisional, the provisional option of staying in the program.

when you take it with the next class, you have to pass it with flying colors or you are out. So, while the rest of the semester, while working on the dissertations, writing, almost graduating I had to go back to the basics and go over the whole material again.

God, I am so unlucky. I want to share with you some biographical facts about my life, you know, I have a mild case of ADD, which is great, you know why? Because, it actually forces me to only study things that I love, things that I care about, because anything else, my concentration just goes away. that forces me to focus on the ultimate currency, on things that make me happy. And You know, when I was in high school, I really wanted to get into a certain program, I failed the entrance exam, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because it gave me so much more time to practice and play squash, and I ended up winning international championships in the

following year, When I was in the University of Cambridge, I was in a PhD program, and I was the only one in my class, and as far as I know, the only one in years to be thrown out of the program. And it was actually a very important experience, you know, I got out of Harvard, I was arrogant, I thought I was holier than thou, and this was a real humbling experience that was especially important for me, because the next year

I went to work in Asia, and there, the worst that I could do was to be arrogant. So this humbling experience actually helped me a great deal in my future career, as well as helped me put things in perspective.

When I came to Harvard, I was the only one in my program to fail the general qualifying exams, it was a hard blow, it was difficult, but it turned out to be a very good experience, you know why? Because I had to study the exact same material and these huge books and articles all over again, and know them not just at the basic level, I had to know them extremely well because that was the condition that the professors gave for me staying in the program. And it was so good because I learned the material so well that I know social psychology today probably better than anyone I know, and

that helps me a great deal. It helps me a great deal in putting together this course 1504, and there is no place I would rather be than here. God, I am so lucky. Thank you. Same reality, different interpretations. Just remember, much of what we experience, we co-create. See you next week.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 8

I ended last time by sharing some biographical details about my life. Some people asked me after, "Are they really true?" So yes, They are absolutely true. And I told the incident from two perspectives— first as a fault finder, and then as a merit finder. Now the important thing to keep in mind when we think about the merit finder is that it's not that the merit finder does not experience pain or disappointment, or anger, or humility, or fear, or disappointment. It's very disappointing to say the least,

not to be able to pursue one's goal, if the goal happens to be a professional career in squash. It is very humiliating to be the only person who fails of a program and to have to walk around for a

whole year in William James while feeling like you have a horn coming out of head. It's not fun. It's painful. However, the difference between a merit finder, sorry, a benefit finder and a fault finder is that, the benefit finder understands that while things don't necessarily happen for the best, it is possible to make the best of things that happen. Things will be OK. Things will turn out fine. It may take a while. Until I see the benefit of it, it may take a while and I will get over the humiliation or the pain or the disappointment. But that, too, shall pass. In other words, the benefit finder understands that these feelings are temporary, gives him or herself the permission to be human and then understands things will turn out fine at the end. I know that. Been there. Done that. Part of life. Permission to be human, which includes permission to experience these emotions and also the permission to fail. We'll talk a lot about this permission to fail when we talk about perfectionism. Because perfectionism is real intense for your failure or we feel it's all or nothing. Either we have a complete flawless record, or it's useless.

It's either phenomenal, or catastrophe. All or nothing. The benefit finder understands that nature, the human nature dictates that we have painful emotions and human nature, or being human dictates we also fail. And that, too, shall pass. There

are many benefits to be a benefit finder. So the first benefit is we simply feel better. We are happier for it. But there are many many others. For example, Suzanne Thompson from Pomona University did following research, She went to people who had just lost their homes in a fire in California, there were many of them at the time- it was a large wildfire, and many people lost their homes and she interviewed them after that. And she distinguished who were benefit finders and fault finders: the benefit finders didn't say "I'm so glad it happened", but they said "well there are some positive here- I can start a new; it's a fresh start; and now I'll appreciate my home more; my family is OK; and I'm relieved and that's good. So they focused on the positive. When she followed up with these individuals, those who were benefit finders as opposed to fault finders were happier in the long term, were able to, were experiencing more positive moods, and less likely to be anxious and had less physical symptoms. Both psychological as well as physical consequences. Numerous, a lot of research on health benefits-for example, Glenn Affleck did research with individuals who had a heart attack. And there were some individuals who saw it as the catastrophe, the end of the world. There were others who were certainly not happy about it, but said "OK, so this is a wake-up call. It's actually some positive here, because it is telling me I need to take care of myself better".

Or it helped them revise their personal values. Those individuals who saw the positive, the benefit, who are able to see the wake-up call there were more likely to survive 8 years later; less likely to have a second heart attack. Now that sounds pretty obvious, because you know they change their life style. But it's not just about changing life style. Julianne Bower we talked about last time from UCLA looked at AIDS patient and identified the benefit finders there- not the people who said "I'm so glad that I have AIDS", but rather the people who said "as a result of that, I am able to appreciate certain things more; as a result of that, I focus more on the things that really matter; as a result, I am getting closer to certain people". The benefit finders,

when she followed up 4 to 9 years later, the benefit finders were more likely to survive, were more likely to be alive. Research by Laura King and Minor: what they showed was that it can also be used as an intervention. So it's not just people who are born benefit finders or fault finders - and we know there is a genetic component too, but there could be an intervention. So they brought in people who'd experienced traumas in their lives and they had them write about these traumas and their "perceived" benefits of the trauma. Those who wrote about the "perceived benefit" of the trauma were physically healthier and psychologically healthier, happier. Another research on cancer patients. The women came in and wrote about their cancer. And they wrote about "good things that came out of my experience with cancer". The women who wrote about this, visited the doctor office less often, were more likely to survive their cancer. Just by changing their perspective, by changing their focus. Now these women did not say "it happened for the best". Maybe some did; but most did not.

They said "I wish I didn't have this cancer". However it happened, you know. Stuff happens. The question is what we do with it; how we interpret it after. Then they said to themselves "OK, so we get closer to our family; I'm appreciating life so much more now; I can enjoy the breath or flower, or I couldn't before my family so much closer now; I know who my real friends are". And they found benefit in it. Not for the best. But they made the best of the things that happened. And that made the difference even to their mortality rates. There's a lot of research on optimism, benefit-finding and longevity. For example, in a sample of 839 residents in the Mayo clinic, when they looked at them, they identified the benefit finders and fault finders. The benefit finders that are optimists were, after 2 years, were 19% more likely to survive. By far, the most influential and interesting study done in this area of benefit finding and optimism was the nun study. The nun study showed in many ways that the Bible was correct, that joy does prolonged our lives. And the nun study was done, started in

1932. In 1932, 178 nuns who just completed their training- they were around the age of 22, just about to embark on their mission were tested on numerous accounts. One of the things they did was write biographical sketches of themselves. And we had this data for decades. And psychologists just very recently opened up the data and wanted to look at it, wanted to understand what predicts longevity. Which of the nuns are still alive today? How long did they live? OK, this was done in 1932 when they were average age of 22. And they looked for predictors of longevity so they looked at how complex their essays were- in other words, their intellectual capacities, zero correlation to longevity;

They looked at place of residence- maybe they lived in places with less or more pollution that would impact how long they lived, zero correlation- California, Boston, no difference; they looked at how devout they were, their levels of belief at that time at the age of 22- didn't predict longevity. There was one thing and one thing alone that predicted how long they would live. And that was positive feelings. What they did, the researchers, was looking at the biographical sketches-now they had no idea who these women were, so it was a completely blind study- double blind. And

they looked, they categorized the writings into four categories: the most positive, the least positive and two categories in between. And then they compared the most positive quartile to the least positive quartile. And here are the results that they found. Let me give you a sample though before so that you get a sense of what a positive sample is and what a less positive sample is. So here is Cecilia Opine from the positive quartile: "God started my life off well by bestowing upon me grace of inestimable value.

"The past year which I spent as a candidate studying at Notre Dame has been a very happy one. Now I look forward with eager joy to receiving the Holy Habit of Our Lady and to a life of union with Love Divine." Happy. Joy. Love. This is a positive person. Now here is someone from the least positive quartile. As you'll see,

this is not someone who is particularly negative, but not a person who focuses on positive, on joy, on happiness. Marguerite Donnelly: "I was born on September 26, 1909, the eldest of seven children, five girls and two boys. My candidate year was spent in the motherhouse, teaching chemistry and second year Latin at Notre Dame Institute. With God's grace, I intend to do my best for our Order, for the spread of religion and for my personal sanctification." Again, very factual. But not as positive as much of a merit finder, an optimist as Cecilia Opine. Let's look at some of the data

now. At the age of 85, at the age of 85—and again, this is a looking back, 90% of the

most cheerful quartile were alive and just 34% of the least cheerful quartile were alive. This is significant difference. Now that doesn't mean that there aren't some fault finders who lived to 120 and merit finders who died of a heart attack at 30. Of course, there are. But on average, the best predictor what accounts for the most of the variance, in terms of longevity in the study, was positive feelings- positivist in general. Here is 9 years later. Same study. At the age of 94, 54% of the most cheerful quartile were still alive while just 11% of the least cheerful quartile were alive. These are remarkable results. Again, you have some sketches. You analyze them, not knowing who lived and who died. And just based on the single factor- positivist, you are able to predict with remarkable significant levels. You are able to predict longevity- who will be alive and who will not be.

Now when I look at this data- and there's a lot more data on longevity, on health, on well-being, I said to myself, || Wow. So this is fantastic! Benefit finding really works! Being an optimistic is good!" And I have two questions then, || Why isn't everyone optimistic?" If we become happier, if we become healthier, why not, why

aren't we all optimistic? That's the first question. The second question is: alights I want to be more optimistic. How do I become that? So first one: why aren't more people optimistic? Second: how do I become optimistic? I am going to answer these two questions. Let me begin with the first. One of the main reasons why there aren't

more people who are optimistic is that optimists are considered detached. And how do we know

that? Well, or what leads to the sense of detachment, to the notion that optimists are detached? It's mostly the media. Because what do we see? We mostly see hatred. We mostly see blood shed. We mostly see unhappiness. We see terrorism. And then, when someone says "well I'm optimistic; I think the world is a good place", that person- what? Are you out of your mind? You are detached Pollyanna. Just look at all the terrible things in the world. How can you be in such a world- how can you be optimistic? How can you be positive? How can you talk about joy and happiness? And positive psychology in a world like this? You must be Pollyannaish. In many ways, the message of Thomas Hobbes is correct: you know, life is short, brutish, nasty and poor. And that seems much more likely to be true than an optimistic sense of life.

Let's look at some of the headlines. I got these just a couple of weeks ago as I was preparing for this particular lecture. So Venezuela. A missing jet. Flight delays. Ok, this is the elections. Fresh violence in Kosovo. So a new state is created, and there is violence. This is the focus. Hundreds of homes damaged by quake. And so on. Turkey launches incursion into Iraq. Blood (There will be Blood vs. No Country for

Old Man) dual for Oscar. Octant's a good one I guess. Yeah. Tory Spelling dishes... Auklet's move on. So that was CNN. Here is... What was that? Forget which paper I

got. I think this is Reuters. Iran nuclear question remains. And you know again, Turkey. Protest embassies. EU. So on and so on. Negativities. This is Fox News. What's the focus? This kid's mom wants out. A mother leaves her child. You know it's not focusing on the millions, billions of mothers who embrace their children. It's the mother who wants out. And then they tell why- you know, what led the mother to want out of this relationship. And so on and so on. So much negative. How can we be

positive in a world like this? It would be really unrealistic of us, wouldn't it? Well, I

want to show you an excerpt now by my favorite psychologist, Ellen Degeneracy. Ellen Degeneracy (Excerpt from "Here and Now" in 2003): So I was watching the

news the other day. Brought to you by Papal. Well now I need it. Smart advertising.

That's another thing when I was a kid the news was once a day. You either caught it or missed it. Now the news is on 24 hours a day. And that's not enough. They got a guy talking and there's a crawl down there. So you got that guy talking and you got the crawl going and you're online and you put your opinion and you put.. "Nooo!!..I said to that nook...!" There should be one crawl that goes around over and over again: "Things are getting worse". That's all we need. And the local news- man! They want

to you to watch every broadcast they've got, don't they? It's not good enough you

watch the one you want? They just... These teases get you to watch it later on. They are so incredible cruel. "It could be the most deadly thing in the world that you may be having it for

dinner. We'll tell you what it is tonight at 11." Is it ..peas? I feel sorry for the news-casters, you know. We can turn it off. But that's their job and they have to read these stories and they're just coming up at the teleprompter. They don't know what's coming up and they got to go through these range of emotions and that... "There were no survivors. And next, which candy bar helps you lose weight? Still to come, it's an asteroid heading towards earth. But first, where to find the cheesiest pizza in town? Also, a disturbing new study finds that studies are disturbing." She really is one of the most brilliant psychologists I know. And we'll see a lot of her throughout the semester. Now...so the media does it. The media does focus to the great extent on the negative. And that's not just a bad thing. Because one of the roles of media in a civil society is to highlight wrongs that can be righted, to inspire people, to act, to change, to make the world a better place. However, we need to realize that the media doesn't just report reality as it is.

It highlights certain aspects of reality. And there is a media bias involved. Now the media bias is not, you know, left-leaning CNN or Reuters versus right-leaning Fox and Wall Street Journal. That's not the bias I am talking about. I am talking about bias

toward the negative. The media focuses, highlights the negative. It acts as a magnifying glass rather than as a looking glass. And we need to keep that in mind, and to correct for that. The media doesn't just reflect reality as it is. Reality is not the

FrontPage of the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal. That's not reality. That's highlighting a specific area of reality and magnifying it. It accentuates the negative, focuses on the negative- the war in, with Turkey, or, the blood spilled in Kosovo, or the mom leaving her child. The hatred. And what it does, when it does that, is also under represent the positive. Now if you think about it, this is exactly two of the three mental distortions that we talked about. Magnifying the negative. Minimizing the positive. In other words, what the media does is to distort our perception. It actually makes us into pessimists, especially because the news is on 24 hours a day. And we are constantly bombarded by negativity after negativity after negativity. And where do we get the positive? 30 seconds at the end of the news. Oh yes, there's also a little bit

good stuff going on. And it's just to make you smile so that you come back tomorrow or the next hour for more bad news. Negativity after negativity after negativity. Distorting. Creating these cognitive distortions, the psychological traps that we talked about under cognitive behavior, under cognitive therapy.

And we become pessimistic. Is it any wonder that most people are pessimistic when the media has such an impact on us? Again, not to belittle the role of the media. But what I am doing is highlighting certain aspect that we need to be cognizant of, that we need to counter. And how we counter- we'll talk about it in a minute. So what does the media highlight? The frauds- Martha Stewart, or Enron, or WorldCom. Highlighting these frauds, but not reporting on the millions and billions of honest transactions that takes place everyday, right now as we speak. Highlighting the negative. Ignoring the positive. Millions and billions of honest transactions taking place all the

time, all around us constantly. Now what else is happening? What we are doing, what the media is helping us to do is extrapolate from a few instances where

people want to hurt, while ignoring the millions and billions of people who are dedicating their lives to helping spread the happiness in the world, whether it's in soup kitchens to help the world a better place, or whether it's writing in our back yard. Over

1800 Harvard students volunteer as part of Phillips Brooks House. Remember the false stereotype that I talked about- whether it's here at Harvard or in the United States, so many people dedicate so much time to helping.

And yet the focus is on the few that hurt. And that creates certain scheme in our mind while we think the world must be a bad place. The focuses are on terrorism primarily. But what about the millions and billions of people who want to live in peace? Again, this doesn't mean this is one important role of the media. At the same time, we shouldn't also ignore the good. The focus in media is mostly on people hurting other people. For example, through rape, while ignoring millions and billions of people who are making love everyday. And not just in fairy tales, people all over the world- I've no idea who they are. I hope they are not in the classroom. There is Google image. And not just around the world. Also, right here- in Harvard yard. I don't know if they still have this survey, but the last one I found online was 04. I don't know what happened since. Now for those of you who don't believe that there are people also at Harvard right here who make love. Here is a proof of positive that some do. He's so cute. And the baby is adorable. OK. OK. OK. Now what I'm saying here is not that we need to ignore the bad, not that we need to ignore what's not working. We should focus on it. We should look at it. We should improve the world. At the same time, we should also understand that people who say to the optimist, to the benefit finder "Get real" are actually missing the point. Because it's not the benefit finder who's detached. It's the fault finder who is. Because there is much more good in the world than bad. Much more. In fact, it's not just about focusing on the "full half" or,

the "full half". It's focusing on the 90%. Because there is a lot more good than bad in our world. And it's important not just because it is a nice thing to do, not just because

it makes us healthier and happier. It's important because focus creates reality.

I mean we saw it on so many levels. We saw it with the children on the bus that we didn't notice. We saw it when it came to Mara Collins who said "let's focus on the seed of greatness in these individuals". We saw it with the research on resilience when the focus was on "why are so many failing" versus "what make some individuals succeed" despite the unfavorable circumstances. Focus creates reality. Also, think about it. I mean when we read about frauds and dishonesty in newspaper constantly, what we begin to believe- what we naturally begin to believe is "well, you want to be successful? You want to become the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, like Enron? You have to engage in fraud. There is no real other way to succeed. Why? Because the millions of

other people who are succeeding honestly are not reported on, are mostly not reported on. And that's what we focus on. Not to say it's not important to have whistle blower and to talk about these things. It's equally important though to also focus on those who do it honestly and well, because there are vast majority, way over

90%. Because if we don't, then the person will think "well, if I want to succeed in

business, then you know I have to bend the rules".

And when an ethical decision comes up, when he or she becomes the manager at the age of 35, they say "well, the only way to succeed is I bend the rules slightly". And that creates self-fulfilling prophecy. Or, how many people here- seriously show of hands- once thought of going into politics, becoming governor, or President, or Prime Minister? How many people thought of going...No, other than me. OK, quite a lot. I mean, we know that, at Harvard, there are quite a few... Now out of those who put the hands up, how many people were told by others "you shouldn't go into politics- you are too honest"? Too honest. You know, we hear it all the time. And that becomes self-fulfilling prophecy, because many honest people who could potentially make the world a better place by going into politics don't go in. Because "politicians are

crooks". Well, politicians are not crooks. Yes, there are politicians who are crooks, but they are the minority. The majority do honest work, want to make the world a better place. They surely make mistakes. They are human after all, but with good intentions, within ethical code. You know it's a wonder that there is so much good in our world, while the focus is so much on the bad. It really is a wonder to me. It just shows how powerful human nature, and how powerful the good part of our nature is, because we can sustain goodness. Also, how about this?- The constant chattering in our mind is "why didn't I do this? Why haven't I done the reading yet? Why haven't I completed my paper? Why did I say that to that person? Why did she said that back to me?" Mostly, negative chatter.

How often do we have the chatter "well you know I have a really lovely conversation today"? Or "you know, I just finish so much work- I was productive. I did so well." "Wow, I just got an A- and I didn't even work that hard for it."

I mean, of course, not here, but seen other places. Why don't we have these kind of chattering in our mind? Again, because our schema focuses on negative. We are going to talk about change next week and we'll understand there are actual neural pathways that have been created by media, by the focus on what is not working. Having created it so we gravitate toward becoming fault finders. How we change that? We'll talk about that in a minute. It's important to focus on the good. You know what they say about Gandhi? That the most important thing that he did for his country that he made India proud of itself. He made India proud of itself. That is so important to do. What about

America? Are you proud of America? Do we living here or, as Americans, the majority here, do you make America proud of itself? Because you know America has faults. It is not a perfect country. It has made mistakes from 1776 and will continue to make mistakes for, hopefully for many years to come. But still, I would argue, the greatest country in the world. So many people want to come here,

want to live here. Why? Because of the freedom. Because of the opportunities. Again, not perfect, but a great country. Do we appreciate America? Do we appreciate its greatness? Because if we don't, we can pay a high price. It's in vogue now "US

bashing" in this country. In this place. And the problem is when we just focus on bashing, when we just focus on the negative, we create a worse reality rather than improving the reality. So yes, we need to be critical. And one of the virtues of this great country is that you can stand out in the street or write in articles and criticize the politicians, the system, other people. It's one of the great contributions of this country: free speech. But at the same time, we also have the freedom and we should exercise the freedom to focus on what is working on the good. Because appreciating is important, whether it's a country, whether it's a relationship, whether it's individual, whether it's students, whether it's teachers. Appreciation is important.

The meaning of "appreciate" from dictionary: valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems. So the first meaning of appreciate is to say thank you. That's a nice thing to do, but it's much more than just a nice thing to do. We talked about this before. The second meaning of appreciate is increasing value: the economy appreciates; money in the bank appreciates. And that's an important meaning, because when we appreciate the good, the good appreciates. When we appreciate the good in our lives, when we appreciate the good in other people, when you appreciate the good in our country, we get more of it. Unfortunately, the opposite is also the case. When we don't appreciate something, whether it's ourselves, whether it's our country, whether it's our relationship, the good depreciates. Remember I talked about it in the past. Is it any wonder so many relationships flounder, fail after the honeymoon phase? If the main question becomes "what's wrong?" or "How can we improve the relationship?" and if we just ask this question, our focus becomes on what is not working, on the

weaknesses. And we ignore the virtues, the strength, the things that worked and are working. And when we don't focus on these things, they depreciate. As far as we are concerned, they don't exist, just like the children on the bus that not exist for you as far as you were concerned. What appreciating does is in essence create a growth spiral.

Let me expand. Let me just give you a random example. Let's say, Monday morning, or Tuesday morning, you are walking toward 1504. And suddenly you see a friend of yours. A friend of yours you know who's genuine, is real- someone you trust.

And your friend looks at you and says, || Wow. You look fantastic!" NOW, how do you

feel at that point? You feel fantastic. And you know you walk a little bit more pride, more proud and you walk into the classroom just here. And another friend sees you and says, || Wow! You look fantastic!" And how do you feel at this point?

Well,fantastic-er! And then you come in. You sit down here. And another friend who you haven't seen for a month sees you, "Wow! You look fantastic!" And how do you feel at this point? Fantastic-its! And so on and so on and so on- made you day in an upward spiral. Now think about a slightly different scenario. You walk in 1504 on Thursday morning. And suddenly a friend of yours whom you trust and value sees you and says,"oh my God, what's wrong?"

Now there may have been nothing wrong before; there is a lot wrong now. And you walk in the door, and someone sees you and says,"oh my Lord." And how do you feel? You feel even worse. And you sit down and you see someone else who looks at you, just completely shocked. And you are feeling worse-r and worse-its. And so on and so on and so on in a downward spiral. Appreciation creates upward spiral. And we know,sometimes,one sentence, one word at the beginning of the day- and you have a wonderful day, or week. This research showing how a single sentence very often can impact an entire life. This is work done by Bandera. Single sentence of appreciation

can give us strength to go on. Now the key here: it has to be genuine appreciation. One of the things we'll talk about when we discuss self-esteem is how destructive and harmful in genuine appreciation is. And now I am not talking about your boyfriend or girlfriend ask you "so how do I look" having just come out, come back from a day and worn something the whole night. You are not going to tell them "well, actually awful". So OK. We are not talking about these grey areas. But it has to be real. It has to be connected to reality. We'll talk about that much more when we talk about self-esteem. The key though is that you need to understand there is always something real to appreciate. Think about the study with the cancer patients, or AIDS patients. Even they were able to find something good in a very difficult, tragic scenario, situation. And when they appreciate the good, when they find benefit in that situation, the good appreciates. It grows.

Orphan real benefit finder: "What you focus on expands, and when you focus on the goodness in your life, you create more of it. Opportunities,relationships,even money flowed my way when I learned to be grateful no matter what happened in my life." Because what we focus on appreciates. Again, the metaphor that I have been talking about throughout the course: the seed- what happens to a seed if we don't water it? If we don't shed a light on it? What happens to that seed is that it withers and dies. And that,unfortunately,is the fate of most human potential. Most relationship potential. Most countries. And if we want it to grow, want it to blossom, we have to shed a light on it. We have to water it. This is exactly what Mara Collins did with the seed of greatness that

existed in every one of her students. This is what the Pygmalion, the classic experiment showed, was that when teachers were made to focus on the potential in those individuals who were deemed "fast sputters". When they were made to focus on it, to shed a light on- when a light is shed on their potential, that's when the children grew. That's when they fulfilled much more of their potential. So how do we correct the false schema? What do we do about it? Let me share with you

something on the societal level, something on the individual level. On the societal level, create good news. Not enough of it around. Now people say it's not marketable, it's boring- wallow. A lot of it is not marketable. Part of it is because it is the norm, it's

the usual. But why not report on the great technical advances that are making life better?

Why not report much more on the great medical advances? Why not report much more on peace? And well-being? You know a situation stops being interesting once there is peace. It's interesting when there's a war. Well why not focus more on these areas? Here is a newspaper that was started online- Good News Network, that I highly recommend you to go onto. Just in a couple of last years it was started. Getting people to focus on what is working. You know about Albert Einstein, about Cambodia gaining independence on that day in '53. Berlin Wall. You know, focusing, reminding ourselves of historical good as well as on present good and they have great news that they talk about. Another, Geemundo, another, I don't even know what that means but another online newspaper that focuses on things that work. Why not start a day with that, well, in addition to opening the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. Looking at that as well. Just to counter the negative schema. Art. So important. So important in creating a better world, in changing our internal schema. Look at the light in Vermeer's- Renaissance artist in his picture A light during a time when there was not much light. I mean consider the Dark Ages. The Middle Ages. But the artists focused on what is working on the light, on the human potential and paved the way the Renaissance. It all started with arts. Or in 18th and 19th century, Romantics. Beethoven or Victor Hugo. They encountered a harsh reality. But they focused also on heroic, on the great, on the human potential. Aristotle once said, "fiction is more important than history." Because history depicts life as it is, where the fiction depicts life as it can or ought to be. As it can or ought to be. The human potential. And that paved the way to much higher levels of freedom and equality in the world.

Or 1930s' America, in many ways the heyday of Hollywood were directors like Cukor, Capra, Sturges, created masterworks during a time when there was Great Depression. And people used to go to the cinema and watched these films to inspire them and helped them get through the difficult time- it was also between the two- you know, the Great War and the WWII. Difficult time in the world. World recovering and then plunging into another war. And yet the artists continued to inspire. Not ignoring what is not working. Not ignoring, but improving. That, by the way, is my favorite

movie, Sullivan's Travels. Modern art as well. Wouldn't it be lovely if we go into a

gallery and we feel inspired by the art- whether it's by photography, whether it's by sculpting, whether it's by movies or books? There has to be much more of it. Again, one of the roles of the artists is also to highlight what is not working so that it is improved. But if an artist, if an individual is really concerned about improving the good in the world, it is not enough to only focus or highlight what's not working. Because if we don't highlight the good, if we don't appreciate the good as well, the good depreciates. Positive psychology- this is what it is very much about. Remember there are two things that positive psychologists do. What they study the first thing that they do is focusing on what works. Second thing that they do is focusing on the extraordinary on the tip of the stem. And by doing that, the words of Miriam, they democratize excellence. Because they are focusing on the good, not ignoring what works in each individual, not ignoring the extraordinary individuals, the Mara Collins of the world, the resilient kids in at-risk population and so on.

Another reason in addition to media why we tend to ignore the good and focus mostly on the bad is that we adapt. We adapt to what is common and what drives us, what's interesting to us is the uncommon. The exception rather than the rule. And because there is so much more good in the world- it's so much more common, we adapt to it. We stop seeing it after a while, whereas the bad- the exception always captures our attention. Why? Because nature creates us such that we are changed

detectors. We are changed detectors. And whenever there is a change, our mind immediately goes to that change. Something different that happens, whether it's something we see, or something we hear (sound: car alarm set off in the background) for those of you who were asleep.

It's the exception that wakes us up. And that's a good thing. It's a good thing that nature creates us that way. Because it helps us in case of danger. Because it helps us for example, hear when there is a lion coming toward us or trying to creep up toward us. It helps us smell poison. Something that is different, that changed. It also helps us hear a sleeping baby it's incredible how this works. Fast asleep- you know there, there can be- the house may be falling. You don't get up, but there is a baby crying and you are up in a second. We are change detectors. And nature created us such- or God has created us such so that we can survive better. Now it's actually a good thing that we adapt on a few levels. First of all, if we didn't adapt, if we are hearing all the noises, we will quite literally go nuts. Because there are so many noises right now going on in addition to what you are listening to. People typing. People breathing. Once in a while car from the outside. And we would go crazy if we were always attune to everything that was going on. So it's good that we adapt. That's why people can live literally on the highway and still fall asleep at night. Because after a month or so, they stop hearing the cars there. We have relatives in Concord, who live quite literally on top of the train. And we went to visit him for dinner and a train passes by. And you know the house shakes. And it's enormous noise. And at the beginning of the time, we looked at each other, and he smiled. And second time the train goes by. The house shakes and huge noise. And I couldn't help myself and said, "Doesn't that bother you?" And he said, || "What?" He didn't know what I was talking. I said, || "The train just passed." He

said, "Oh. We don't notice it anymore because it passes every half an hour or every 20 minutes." They don't notice it. So good thing that we can adapt. Also in terms of difficulty. Personally the most difficult experience that I endured was on the 19th of

September, the 19th of December, 1997. I was living in Singapore at the time. My best friend was coming over from Indonesia to visit me. The person who was the most important to me at that time and her plane crashed. Silk Air Flight MI 185. Some of you may remember this. And my world crumbled. For the first time in my life, I felt that I didn't want to go on anymore. I had no energy. And I called up my family. And I called up another person who had made a lot of difference in my life, Nathaniel Branden, for various reasons.

First of all, Nathaniel Brandon had just- he's a well-known author and psychologist- he's just visited Singapore. He just met Bonny. And I called him up because he was a psychologist whom I thought could help me. But also because at the age of 45, he lost his wife who drowned in a pool when she had apoplectic fit. He found her drowned when he came back home in their pool, in their home. So he'd been through that, but 25 years earlier. So I wanted to talk to him to get his advice. I was on the phone and could hardly get my words across- I was crying constantly. And he said to me, "Tal, what I am going to tell you now is not going to make sense. But it's true. You are going to get over this. I know you are. We get over losses. It's difficult. It's painful. Cry. Give the emotions their spaces. But you are going to get

over it. We get over painful emotions. We all do. Because if we hadn't, then God help us all." Because if we hadn't, then God help us all. And it took a long time. It was after 3 months that I could start working again. It took a whole year for me to feel

some of the bounds, some of the passion for life that I felt before. But now I think about Bonny. And I smiled wistfully, sadly. But I can also appreciate the good times that we have together. And the privilege that I had of meeting her. We adapt and that's a good thing. That's an important thing. Because God help us all if we hadn't. There is another side though to that equation. There is another side. When we adapt, we also take things for granted. And that's not a good thing. Because we take for granted our family that we care about so much. And we take for granted our friends. And we take

for granted the food we are about to have in the dinning hall that is served to us. What a luxury.

And we take for granted the person who's sitting next to us. And we take for granted the classes we take here. Because we adapt. And it's a good thing when it comes to the negatives. It's not such a good thing when we take life for granted. And the question we need to ask is: is it possible to have it all? Is it possible to adapt to the negatives, but at the same time, not to adapt as much to the positive. There's a story in the Jewish tradition about a man who is living in one of the stets, one of the villages in Eastern Europe. And he really had it bad. I mean he was living in a tiny home with many kids, with a wife who was constantly nagging him. They were constantly fighting.

And they were really terrible. And that man wanted to improve his law so he went to the rabbi and recounted him how terrible his life is. He said "look. We live in a small home. The kids are all over. You know no privacy whatsoever. My wife nags constantly. Rabbi, help!" So the rabbi said, || in your yard, do you have a chicken?" So

he said,"yes,we have chicken." "For the next week, bring the chicken into your home." "But rabbi, what are you talking about? We have no pal..." "Bring the chicken into your home." The person was a devout man, believing his rabbi, brought the chicken for the whole week in their home. Feathers. Dirt. Stinks. You name it. The kids continue to fight even more. His wife nags even more. "what are you doing to us here? Our house is small as it is." "The rabbi said." And they continue to fight, and bickering.

The week finally ends. And he runs to the rabbi and said, "rabbi, help!" And the rabbi said, || how are things going?" He said,"Well,worse! No place at home. We are fighting. It stinks. It's terrible." "My child, do you have a cow in your backyard?" "Yes, rabbi. We have a cow." "Well, bring her into the house in addition to the chickens for the week." "Rabbi, but..." "Just do it." So he brings in the cow. And again,

it's awful. It stinks to the tenth degree in his nose. And they don't even sleep for the whole week. And it's terrible. By the end of the week, you know he's looking terrible, disheveled. He stinks. He goes to the rabbi and says, "rabbi, help! Situation is terrible. Yes, it's so much worse." "Do you have a horse in your backyard?" "Yes, rabbi. We do. But now I understand the pattern here." "Take the horse and bring it into your house."

So he takes the horse and brings it into the house. And it's awful. The horse is kicking and yelling and jumping and breaks stuff. And there's mess and chaos and bickering and... So much worse. And finally the week ends. He runs to the rabbi. And the rabbi says, || how are you doing?" "Rabbi, it's terrible! It's awful!" "OK. For the next week,

why don't you take out all the animals and come and see me then?" At the end of the week, he comes and the rabbi says, || how are things going?" "Rabbi, it's wonderful. We have so much place. The smell is so good. We are getting along now like we hadn't ever before. The kids are happy. Thank you so much, rabbi." Now here is the question.

Do things need to get worse before we appreciate what's right in front of us and all around us? When do we begin to appreciate our health? When do we begin to appreciate our health? When something goes wrong with us or with someone else. When do we begin to appreciate life? When ours is in danger, or when we lose someone dear to us. And the question that we need to ask ourselves is "must something external, extraordinary, unusually tragic happen for us to appreciate the ordinary?" You see there are treasures of happiness all around us and within us, right next to us- in the dinning hall, sitting next to you here, in your room at home. There are wonderful things- things that are worth your appreciation all around us or within us. But we take them for granted and do we need to wait for that. And the answer is no. No- if we learn

gratitude as a way of life, if we cultivate the habit of gratitude. It is just as the media has cultivated the fault finding. We can cultivate the benefit finding. We can cultivate grateful.

Because when we are grateful for something, we do not- we no longer take it for granted. G. K. Chesterton: "You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink. Gratitude produced some...produced the most purely joyful moments that have been known to man." Think about it. Think about the last time you are grateful to someone. And you expressed that gratitude. How did you feel? And how did you make the other person feel? Or someone who was grateful to you and appreciated you? You were walking on air, created this upward spiral as a result. When it's genuine, when it's real. We don't do it enough. We don't do enough appreciation. We don't express gratitude enough, whether it's to the food that we eat, whether it's to writing, whether it's for our friends or family. So this is the most wonderful books written about the power of gratitude- it's not a research book, but a lot of these ideas that I'll talk about in a minute have researched. "About Gratitude" by Brother David Steindl-Rast. He also has a great website. If you Google his name. How do we cultivate gratitude? His advice is simple and gracious. "Why not start by surveying a typical day? What is it that you tend to tackle with spontaneous mindfulness, so that without effort your whole heart is in it? the way it warms you and wakes you up, or taking your dog for a walk, or giving a little child a piggyback ride. It is a matter of practice of doing it over and over again till it becomes second nature." Till it becomes a habit. Till we take a stake of gratitude and turn it into a gratitude trait. And it is possible to do it.

One of the ways to do it is to identify everyday just one or two things to do mindfully, to focus on them, whether it's the first cup of coffee in the dinning hall, whether it's the walk to class, whether it's 10 minutes in the afternoon when you just listen to the music in your room, by yourself with your eyes closed and focused,

appreciating your favorite piece. Taking our time to not just become wine connoisseurs but also life connoisseurs. This course is in many ways about life appreciation. He continues, (Brother David Steindl-Rast): "Gratefulness is the measure of our aliveness. Are we not dead to whatever we take for granted? So Irvin Yalom, Stanford psychiatrist did a lot of research on terminally ill patients. He went to people who had 3 months, 6 months, up to a year to live, and researched this population. And what he found time and again is that these people, time and again were something to the effect of "for the first time in my life, I feel that I am alive." "For the first time in my life, I feel that I am alive." Why? "Because for the first time, I appreciate breathing." "For the first time in many years, I appreciate my husband, my wife, my friend, my children" Flower. The grass. The conversation. For the first time of my life, I appreciate it, whereas before, the focus was just not there. It was other things. On the difficulties, the hardships- mostly on the negative. And remember, as far as you are concerned, the children on a bus did not exist. As far as most people are concerned, the good things in their life, in their relationships, do not exist. Because when we

are not grateful for them, when we take them for granted, as far as we are concerned, they are not there. And we are numb to these things. We are dead to these things. And it takes a wake-up call, like a terminal disease to wake us up? To get us to focus on what is right inside us or all around us all the time? Why? Why wait? Why wait? There's a lot of research on the value of gratitude. You've read one before.

You'll be reading one of the articles by Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough from UC Davis. Let me summarize two studies there into one. So what they did was essentially take random group of people and divide them into four groups. First group every night before going to bed write at least five things for which you are grateful. Big things, or little things. Second group write at least five hassles in your life- five bad things that happen to you. Third group write at least five things that you are better than others at- superior to others. And the fourth group- control group

write about anything that happen to you during the day. The outcome measures are that they looked at what optimism, happiness, physical health (how often they visited the doctor of the six months of the study, one of the studies), how generous and benevolent they were toward other people and finally how likely they were to achieve their goals that they set for themselves- in other words, how successful they were. The group that performed the worst was the hassles group. Five bad things that happen to you. The group that performed the best that is happiest, most optimistic, most likely to achieve their goals, most generous and benevolent toward other people and healthiest, was the group every night before going to bed wrote at least five things for which they were grateful. Both psychological and health benefits.

The study was, in many ways the beginning, one of the first studies they conducted. The book just came out recently, called "Thanks" by Robert Emmons, which is wonderful and traces through a lot more studies and research and exercise that you can do to become more grateful, to have gratitude as a way of life. Physiological benefits such as our heart variability, which is a predictor of longevity, which is a predictor of health is increased. The parasympathetic system increases when we are grateful. And that induces calm. And that strengthens our immune system. There are also many benefits to trait gratefulness, so it is not just a state of being. It's also about the trait. How do we cultivate that? How do we cultivate that? By doing it over and over again. I do this every night. I've been doing it since 19th of September, 1999. Since 19th of September, 1999, I've been doing it. I've been doing it long before the 2002 study. I started to do it when Oprah told me to do it. Really. I've been doing it ever since. Let me share with you what I wrote about last night. It was

26 last night. OK. So God, family, To mush my love- my wife, yoga- I did yoga, David- so wonderful, Serial- precious (my two children), office hours- I had office hours yesterday and I enjoyed it a lot. Beep- sorry. Another beep- sorry. some censorship in this class is important. It took you a while but eh.. OK. Beep- no just

kidding about this one. And Tommy's soup. She made this unbelievable pea soup which I had

yesterday. You know, big things and little things. Big things and little things. And here are other things that I am grateful for right now. I am grateful for Shawn Anchor, the head TF of the class. (Applause) I am grateful for his work, for his inspiration. I am grateful to Debby, the head of TF of the other class. (Applause) I am grateful to the teaching fellows who are investing so much time in your education, in your happiness in this course. (Applause and cheers)

I am grateful to Barry who's there behind the scenes. You don't see him much. But he's responsible for so much what's happening for his support, for how humble he is, doing all that. (Applause) And I am grateful for my students, because it wouldn't be a class- I wouldn't be here today, doing what I love to, what I care about most if you weren't here. So thank you. I am grateful. (Applause) Now the key with this is to do it as well. Yes is it cheesy? Absolutely. Does it make a difference? Absolutely. You know every night I also do it with my kid, with David. And how do I do it? I ask David- he's three and a half years old, "what was fun for you today?" And he tells me and he asks me, "what was fun for you today?" I learned about it from a friend of mine who a hand worker- who was here just a couple of classes ago. He was visiting. And I came over for dinner one day. He heard me speak about this. And he said, "I want to show you something." And he has two young kids. And they were standing around and talking about the five grateful, things for which they were grateful. These were young kids. Daniel and Maya. And I looked at it and I started to cry. It was so moving and so touching. And I've been doing it ever since with my kids. My wife do it every day on regular basis. She puts up with my cheesiness. It helps. It works because

We don't take the good things in our life for granted. The key when we do this is to maintain freshness. How do we maintain freshness? One of the things that happens

with this exercise is that it very often becomes a habit and we lose it. We lose the freshness of it. We lose the mindfulness of it. And we just take it for granted as an exercise. And the key is, one of the things that Lyubomirsky says, well, try to do it once a week. For some people, once a week is actually better than doing it every day.

However, there's also a price. It's much less likely to become a trait if we only do it

once a week. So how do we maintain freshness? Doing it every single day. How do I maintain freshness? Well, fortunately, there's a lot of research on this topic- some of them by Lyubomirsky, as well as by others. The first thing is introduce the variety. So let's say I write about Serial and there's something that I write about every day. It's Serial my daughter, David my son. It's Tommy my wife. It's God. I write about these things every single day. And I write about other things as well. I can write about different aspects of these things. So one day I can write about Serial's smile. You

know her beautiful, one year old, toothless smile. And another day I can write about the fact that she's taken her first steps now. So vary. Or one day I can write about, focus... One week I can focus about my work. Another week it can be mostly focus about personal things. And so on. Variety really is the spice of life- makes a difference here.

Second, Ellen Langer talks about mindfulness. she defines mindfulness as creating novel distinctions. It's similar to creating variety. Looking at the things that I haven't seen before, that I haven't looked at before. This is also a way to maintain love. You know people talk about how over time you become, you adapt to your relationships. well, there's something new to discover about a person every time, whether it's about my parents, whether it's about lover, whether it's about my friends. Creating novel distinctions. Looking at it mindfully. Focusing on it. And maintaining freshness through this focus. Visualizing it. Steven Roslyn from William James Hall, head of our department did research, showing that kids actually visualize most words. So when you see- let's say mother, immediately the picture of mother comes up. Or

it's very often for us when we talk these words unautomatic, we no longer visualize it, which is why it takes kids longer to think. Because they are still visualizing the words. It is not unautomatic anymore, which also explains why kids live like kids, why they are able to appreciate the simplest of things, to be mesmerized by airplane up there. Or when they talk about what they did at day care. They live like children. And what we have become over the years. We adapt to it. We become numb to a lot of these things. So one of the ways to chip away the numbness, one of the ways to do it is to visualize. And when we visualize, we start to see things once again like kids do. Next time we'll continue with this.

But I want to end today by sharing a story with you. A story about the person who, to me more than anyone else captures what benefit finder is. A person who is my role model when it comes to focusing also on the good. My grandmother was born in 1915 in Sighet, Romania. She had a very regular childhood. She was the youngest daughter of 7-one more sisters,5 more bothers. And they were doing well. Many of her brothers became important rabbis,violinists,musicians. And she was a young girl, happy, living a normal life, until 1940 which was when Hitler invaded Romania. Hitler invaded Romania and her life changed radically. Her entire family was taken to one concentration camp after the other, ending up in Auschwitz. In Auschwitz, she had over a dozen nieces and nephews were all murdered. Her five brothers and parents were murdered in front of her very eyes. At the end of the war, somehow, she and her sister survived. The British came to Auschwitz to liberate the prisoners. And when they came, they came in with a doctor. And the doctor would go through the prisoners. Most of them were of course dead; those who were alive, he would say take that person, leave that person here. Because they had limited resources, limited places. Those prisoners who they thought would not survive, they left them there. And it came to my grandmother, who weighed the time 26 kilos which is 54 pounds. My grandmother was a large woman- 54 pounds. And said, leave. And then he saw her

sister who was right next to her, who weighed 36 kilos- 79 pounds. And he said, he made this motion to put her on the truck. And of course, she was too weak to get out.

So the British soldiers picked up my grandmother's sister whose name is Shanti. They picked Shanti up and Shanti held on to her sister. And she wouldn't let go. And they tried to open her grip. And even though she was weak and sick, they couldn't open her grip. So the doctor said, fine, take them both. So they took them both. And they put them on the truck. And they were, of course, certain that my grandmother would die. A month passed and she survived though she didn't put on a single gram. Any day they thought she would die, but she refused to die. After three months, she started putting on weight. She survived. Six months later, she went back to Sighet, to see what was remained from her home. She arrived there, got off the cart with the horse. And the man by the name of Joseph- Jose saw her. And he saw a woman who was stooped, who still had no hair. But he recognized those eyes. Because those eyes were proud. And those eyes were alive. He recognized Goldie. And he took her with him. And two weeks later, they got married. And Goldie got better and got pregnant and gave birth to a stillborn. And she got pregnant again and once again gave birth to a stillborn. They made their way to Tel Aviv from Romania. They were caught by the British. It was British mandate at that time. They were caught by British and sent back to a concentration camp in Cyprus. And there, in the concentration camp, my grandmother in Cyprus had another baby. A baby girl who survived. And then they had another boy who was stillborn. And my grandmother could have no more children. Her body had endured too much. My grandmother survived and thrived.

As did Shanti. Shanti could have no children, but my mother was her child too. And I was her grandchild as well. I remember, this was in October of 1988. Shanti had passed away a few years earlier. And we went to the cemetery on the day that she passed away, to say some prayers over her tombstone. And I went with my

grandmother. And we walked there. And my grandmother stood in front of the tombstone. And on the tombstone, we engraved not just Shanti's name, but the names of all the brothers and her parents. And she looked at the tombstone- and I thought she talked to Shanti- and said to her, "we are so fortunate, aren't we? We are so lucky.

And look Talk is here." She called me Talk. And then she told her what I was doing. And she told her what my brothers and sisters were doing- their grandchildren. And about my mother and father. And how wonderful things were. And she was talking about the wonderful things. And she was crying once in a while, missing Shanti. She was so human, just standing there, and talking half Yiddish, half Hebrew. Once in a while, talking to me. And to her sister who saved her life. And she said to me, "let's

go." And we walked together. Thousands of tombs around us. We walked along the path toward the car. It was a beautiful October day. The sun was out. The wind was blowing. The trees were swinging. And she suddenly stopped. She stopped and looked up. And she stood so proud, so poised. And she held my hand so tight, looking up and looking at me. She said, "Tal, it's such a beautiful world. Just a pity we have to leave." And she smiled. And we walked. My grandmother saw thousands of corpse. She saw her family murdered in front of her very eyes. She had three stillborn children. She did not ignore the terrible things in life. How could she? However, at the

same time, she also refused to ignore the good things in life. The wonderful things in life. And she was grateful. And she survived. My grandmother told me that this is a beautiful world. I believe her. Thank you.(Applause)

Positive Psychology – Lecture 9

Harvard Positive Psychology, So first I wanna say hi to extension school. We have

350 students watching our lecture every day. So I wanna say hi to them. And actually I want to especially invite extension school and everybody here to see our very modest Tal- right?- he didn't tell us he was on 60 Minutes, but that is OK. But Saturday night, Tal is going to be the honorary basketball coach for the women's team, which- the game against Cornell on Saturday at 7 o'clock, which is the biggest game of the season... Six? Six o'clock on Saturday. The biggest game of the season. We actually wanna see everyone of you here and everybody at the extension school at the game. Extension students, I'll have free tickets for you. Well, most of you- a hundred of you. So in honor of that, we have an honorary student and an honorary team which is, our very famous Kathy Delaney-Smith, award-winning, the most fabulous coach in a whole nation and... our women's basketball team is here! Come on now! These are our honorary students. There you go. They are shy. Alright, so come! Come and see them! And actually I'll be there with all my friends and families. And Tal will sign your hand. Alright! Ready guys?

(One player: Yeah.)

This is the biggest game. These are the Ivy League Champs last year! Alright. Give 'em a throw. Throw 'em out. Throw 'em out! Go! Go! Go! Let's go! Go! Go! Let's go! Hahaha. Alright. Thank you. Thanks. I'll see you all on Saturday. Good luck. Thanks. OK. I didn't plan this, but... (Tal blows a whistle.) Alright. Alright, do I have anything else? Oh. OK. Thank you .And thank you. And we are going to continue talking about gratitude. So... Last time, I ended by talking about my role model- the person who to me exemplifies, more than anyone else what a true benefit finder is. And when I told about my grandmother, I told the... I told you how she wasn't ignoring what wasn't working, she wasn't ignoring the evil, the bad, the negative in

her life. However, the same time, she refused to ignore the positive. In other words, what she insisted on was staying real. Being real. Being connected to what was around her. And when it was evil and bad, she was connected to that and at the same time, she was also connected to the good. Benefit finder is not about being a detached Pollyanna. Far from it. The question we asked last time- and I want to end the lecture today on gratitude before we move on to change- was:

One, why are not more people benefit finders? Why are more people not optimistic? I mean, you saw the research. People live longer. They are happier, healthier, more successful. Why isn't everyone a benefit finder? Why aren't we all optimists? If it pays, in both the ultimate currency- the currency of happiness as well as in hard currency- success currency? Why are not more people benefit finders? And the answer to that was, to great extent, because of the media. What we have in the media is magnifying, zooming in, magnifying the negative, maximizing it, having it take the entire screen, the entire page, while minimizing the positives. And in many ways ,the media makes fault finders out of us. And we need to counter that. How do we counter that? On the macro level, by having good news channels, for example. On the micro level, by having more inspiring art. Art throughout history has changed the world- whether it was during the dark ages, at the transition to the Renaissance, whether it was during 18th and 19th century with Romantic artists and paving the road to freedom, whether it was in mid 1930s and 40s with the Renaissance in many ways of Hollywood, bringing more hope to people. So art plays a very important role, and hopefully, will continue to do so. So then we talked about the global level, the macro level. On the micro level, we talked about not waiting for bad things to happen, for tragedy, for something external to happen for us to be grateful.

Because when we are grateful, by definition, we don't take something for granted. And we shared the readings and the research on gratitude. The key, when doing it,

when doing this exercise- and as I said, I do it every single day. I've done it since 19th of September,1999. Every single day. Religiously. The key to doing it and not taking this exercise for granted is by maintaining freshness through- if you want to do it once a week, it's better to do it once a week mindfully than doing it every day and taking it for granted. And OK check- did that. But ideally, you want to do it every day. Because by doing it every day, that's when you form a habit. That's when you transform your thinking. And if you do it every day, the key is to vary, to think about different aspect every day, to think about different aspects of your family if you write family every day. To write about work one week. To write about home the next week. Maintaining mindfulness, focusing on things you didn't notice before, creating novel distinctions, as Ellen Langer would say. And visualize- so when you are thinking about your girlfriend or boyfriend, and writing your gratitude, visualize them. When you are thinking about the meal that you just had in your dinning hall which was delicious, think about it. Visualize it. Make it as real as possible. That's how children think.

And that's why children have this freshness on the day to day- they don't take anything for granted. They see life as a miracle. You know, Emerson once said, "if the stars would shine once in a thousand years, we would all look up and praise the glory of this world. But because they shine every day, we take them for granted." For children, that doesn't exist. And part of the reason why it doesn't exist is that because they don't think automatically, conceptually. They think more perceptually. Or sensually. And they remain connected to the real. And we can do it simply by visualizing. This is a wonderful research done here, William James Hall,8th floor. The key to this, as to any change that we'll talk about- we are going to devote more than two

lectures to change today as well as the whole of next week- the key is to do it. To just do it. There are no short cuts. It's not because you've been through a lecture on gratitude and you understand, you really understand what a benefit finder means. That doesn't... That will not in and of itself make you a benefit finder. You need to do it.

You need to experience it. And it's only through that, that over time, over time, you'll begin to see more and more of the positive in the world and counter the current schema that most of us have literally been imprisoned by, the fault finder schema. William James in 1890, said that it takes about 21 days to change a habit. It's probably a little bit optimistic. May take a little bit longer. But try for 21 days. See what happens. You know there are some people. I know some of you have already started this after last class. Some people see the benefits immediately and then you know the benefits may go away. And then they see the benefits again six months later. But try. Try it for at least 21 days. At least a month. Next week is going to be your task as part of your weekly assignment.

But start today. Don't wait. No other way to change. Because what you are doing is gradually chipping away the excess stone. That excess stone, that limitation that has been put on us by the schema all around us, by the news that you read this morning, by most conversations, internal conversations that go on as well as the external conversations. And what you are doing, when you are doing this simple exercise, the reason why it works so well- remember people who do it regularly and mindfully are happier, healthier, or more generous and benevolent, more successful. The reason why it works is because what you are doing is chisel by chisel, chipping away the excess stone. In my book, I talked about O'Hart Cummin, my teacher and I've spoken to him... about him a few times in the class. He told me a story once when he was not much older than most of you- he was in his mid-20s, left Israel to... He was living in Europe for a few years and ended up in Holland. And after a while, he found himself homeless, literally living under a tree, cold- it was the winter, penniless- didn't have any money and without any friends. Absolutely miserable. And somehow for some reason, he said OK. He was in this depression for a few weeks and he said, "well, let me try something." Took out a piece of paper and on this piece of paper, simply wrote everything for which he was grateful.

So the kind of things he wrote there, as he told me: Beethoven's fifth- he loves music. He wrote his parents, who were in Israel. He wrote vanilla icecream, which until today is his favorite. He thought about his friends back home. All the things- he made a long list of all the things in the world for which he is grateful for. And he credits this experience as the turning point in his life. Why? Because he started to focus on something else. Not just on the impossibilities, on the terrible, but on the possibilities, the wonderful. Do the experi... And by the way, he has this- he's now 55 years old. He has this piece of paper with him, crumbled but still there, in his wallet, reminding him that there is so much, so so many wonderful things in the world. Just think about the kind of life that we are leading. Back only 200 years ago, who could afford to listen to their favorite musicians, or to watch their favorite actors, favorite plays? Who could afford to do it? Only royalty. And even them- they were limited, in terms of which musician was in town or what players were in town. Today, we have literally the tip of our finger, whether it's on our MP3 or our

DVD player. Imagine... Just think about the luxury that we are living in. Kings and Queens that not lived that kind of luxury.

However, we get used to it. We adapt. And sometimes it's a good thing, because we also adapt to difficult experiences. And the question is how do we learn in a sense to (12:47), meaning to adapt to the painful but not to remain impervious or to become impervious? To become indifferent to the privilege that we have. How do we maintain the gratefulness? And it's by being mindful. By thinking about those wonderful things that we have, whether it's in a friend, whether it's in a movie we want to watch, whether it's in the lunch we are going to have served to us in our house later. The gratitude exercise- one of the reasons why it's so powerful- because what we are doing is we are co-creating a reality. Most of the questions that we ask or are asked of us is "what's wrong?", "what needs to be improved?", "what are my weakness areas?" Important questions- not enough. If these are the only questions that we ask as far as

we are concerned, good does not exist. And when we ask "what are my grateful for?", even it's just once a day, that in and of itself creates- (A student sneezes) Bless you. That in and of itself creates a new reality. And we begin to see things that we haven't before. So when I do this exercise and I have been doing it for a long time, I notice things today that I wouldn't have noticed, had not been doing this. And I would say, "oh, this is something I am going to write tonight. It's so beautiful."

You know, when I go for a drive and see Sunday night mountains in Hampshire, I'm going to write this down later. It's... And I wouldn't have noticed it. And as far as I was concerned, these things did not exist, just like the children on the bus did not exist, while you are not asking also the right question. It's important to express gratitude obviously not just to ourselves, but also to others. A lot of research on that too. This was done by- you are reading or you have read- the paper by Seligman talking about expressing gratitude to others, whether it's in the form of a letter or a visit or phone call. And the key of expressing gratitude- this is not just a thank you note. Dear Mom, thank you for being so great. Love, me. That's not just a thank you note. It's sitting down and thinking, "what can I be grateful for, for my mom? What has she done to me? What has she given me throughout these years?" And really thinking about it. Or really thinking a thing, "what this teacher from 3rd grade do for me?" Not just talking to my friends, "I have a wonderful English teacher in 3rd grade." But sitting down and thinking.

What am I grateful for? What did she or he do for me that has contributed so much to my life, to who I am today? Or my roommate who always goes out of his or her way to help. I am really grateful. And to think about it. Not just to, you know- at the end of year or of the summer, "oh you are great. You are terrific." Really think about what these people, the important people in your life are doing for you and express it. Don't take that for granted. Don't take for granted that they know how

grateful you are. "Yeah, of course mom knows. Of course dad knows that I'm grateful and they are

terrific." Don't take it for granted. Express it.

Again, write it in a letter or by phone or in person. One of the most effective interventions out there today is expressing gratitude to others especially this one: writing a letter of gratitude and then visiting the person to whom you are writing and reading them the letter. Cheesy? I agree. A little bit embarrassing? Sometimes. You cannot imagine the kind of result that people get when doing just this gratitude visit. But even if you don't visit them, you do feel self-conscious doing it. I do recommend it. But you feel self-conscious, send the letter, make that phone call. And before, just think for a few minutes, "what am I going to say? What am I really grateful for?" Again, whether it's to your parents, whether it's to your friends, whether it's to your 1st grade teacher. Just do it. Whether it's to your coach. The largest peak, boost, spike in wellbeing when we are expressing gratitude to others. Quite remarkable if you think about it. And if you think about it further, it is a win-win. Because obviously you get the benefit- this is what the research shows. We feel good when we express it. and the other person feels good too. They benefit a great deal. So you are creating a win-win and an upward spiral, because that person is then more likely to express gratitude to others. The best way to lead it by an example: be the change you want to see in the world, as Ghandi said. So you want people to be more grateful? Express gratitude yourself. They are more likely to then take it on and express gratitude to others. So not only you start an upward spiral between you and that person, but also potentially between that person as well as others. Paying it forward. Paying it forward.

The downside of this intervention is while it leads to a spike in well-being, that spike usually goes away after about a month. It varies: it can go away after a week or after three months. But the average it goes away after about a month. The spike to well-being. So the key you want to maintain the spike is to do it regularly. Either once

a week. Once a week, two weeks. Once a month. Do it. You can do it one week a gratitude phone call and make it ritual. The next week, a gratitude letter. The week after that, a gratitude visit. Or something like that. Again, variety. Variety really helps here. But do it regularly as a ritual. And when we talk about change next week, we'll talk about the importance of rituals. Because in many ways, that's the only change for real, lasting change. Here's one of the surprising findings that Sonja Lyubomirsky found. What she found is that if we write that letter, we get the spike in wellbeing even if we don't send it. Obviously if we send it and we get feedback, the spike is even higher. But just the act of writing it, of being grateful, being open, that in and of itself contributes to wellbeing. Next week, your response paper is going to be a letter of gratitude, which we will highly recommend you visit the person and read it to them or, at the very least, send it if you are not close to them now physically.

But even if you just write it and don't feel comfortable sending it, that in and of itself contributes to our wellbeing. I want to go a little bit more in depth into how we express gratitude and in general, how we deal with painful and positive emotions. Once again, Sonja Lyubomirsky did

research, while she invited participants to talk about or to share the worst experiences of their lives and the best experiences of their lives. And what she did was divide them actually to four groups. One group- write about it. Write about the ABC, the affect- the emotion, the behavior- what you did then ,and the cognition- what you thought then. Three times on three consecutive days for 15 minutes. First group just wrote about it. The second group talked about it to a tape recorder about the same best experiences and another group, worst experiences. Third group, just think about it- ruminate for 15 minutes also on three consecutive days. What she looked at was physical and mental health. She looked at how healthy they were. She looked at their physical... how they perceived themselves as healthy or not, how many symptoms they actually had. And she looked at their mood- how happy they were. Before the experiment and four weeks later, after that three days,¹⁵

minutes each day intervention.

There was also a fourth group, which was a control group. Here is what she found. So basically you have three or four by two, writing, talking and thinking. Study one: worst experiences. Study two: best experiences. Those who wrote- let me just explicate this. Those who wrote about the worst experiences actually felt better and were physically healthier, compared to the control group four weeks later.

Those who talked about it to a take recorder- remember? about what they felt, about what they've been through, about what they thought at the time while they are thinking now. 15 minutes, three days. Actually, felt better after talking about it. Those who thought about it, who ruminated about it, without talking, without writing about it, actually felt worse and were physically less healthier a month later. The second study, where they wrote about their happiest experiences, we see the opposite trend. In other words, those who wrote about it on what they experience, how they experience it, what they learn from it on three days, for 15 minutes each time, actually felt worse physically as well as mentally after a month. Those who talked about it also about the ABC- the affect, the behavior, the cognition, also felt better and were less healthy a month later. Well those who just thought about it, ruminated about their positive experiences, imagined it on three consecutive days, 15 minutes each day, actually felt better and were healthier a month later, four weeks later. So she ran the third study to understand- this was a surprising result, was not what she expected. So she ran the third study to understand the mechanism- what is going on here. Why is it that when we write and talk about negative experiences, it makes us feel better and healthier? Strengthen our immune system? Whereas when we just think about it, ruminate it, what's going on here? Whereas the exact opposite is the case with positive emotions.

And what she found was there was a distinction between analyzing and replaying. When we analyze an experience, when we make sense of it, it helps. It actually helps.

Painful experiences and negative experiences, which is why therapy helps. And what helps in therapy more than anything is less of technique, less the years of study that the therapists had, less the experience that the therapists had. These things matter. But not that much. What matters most is are they empathic. In other words, are they good listeners? so when we feel like we can talk and analyze about painful emotion, we feel better. We are physically healthier. When we simply sit down and ruminate about painful emotions without making sense of it, we get very often into a downward spiral. We narrow and constrict. We feel more sad. We narrow and constrict even more. Remember the Barbara Fredrickson's studies?

And so on and so on. In contrast, we are not sure why. when we analyze a positive experience, really analyze it- try to understand why it happened and so on. So we do it for three consecutive days. It actually doesn't help. We don't understand why. But maybe it's because it takes all the fun spontaneity from the experience. However when we just ruminate about the positive experience- just think about it, then it contributes to our well-being. The gratitude exercise is about replaying the experience. It's exactly that. In other words, it's thinking about our happiest experiences of the day, which leads ultimately to positive outcome. So what is it saying about the permission to be human? How is it different? Because the permission to be human is also very much related to being happier and healthier in the long term. Well here's the difference: with the permission to be human, we give ourselves the permission to experience the emotions for as long as necessary. If we just lost someone, it would be much longer than if we just didn't perform so well in the test. But we give ourselves the permission to experience the experience. And then we ask ourselves, "so what would be the most effective way to act now?"

And one of the most effective way to act would be to share that experience. One of the most effective way to act would be to just write in our journal. Daily active

acceptance. Not just ruminating and staying there with this painful emotion. Now one of the things I thought about it also in the context of my grandmother's experience is why is it that- we'll talk about PTSD in a few minutes- why is it that so many people in the United States coming back from Vietnam (30% of Vietnam vets experience post traumatic stress disorder). It affected their entire lives. Whereas people who have been through the holocaust, no less terrible experiences, very often, much worse experiences, people who have been through the holocaust, percentage wise- there are far less people who have PTSD- post traumatic stress disorder.

Why this difference? I mean, you know in Israel, 50% of the older population- when I was born, 50% of the population were holocaust survivors. I didn't see much post traumatic stress disorder there. Whereas again, 30% of Vietnam vets have PTSD. Now the jury is still out to see how many of the second Iraq war will come back with PTSD, but the number is going to be staggering too.

Why? What's the difference? And I think this explains the difference. You see, Vietnam is not a popular war. Many of the vets who came back to their home, to their country didn't talk about it openly. They kept it inside them. And what they did was they were- right here- thinking about some of the worst experiences, replaying it in their minds over and over and over again. And the situation just worse and worse and worse. In contrast, people coming from, again no less terrible experiences in the holocaust. They came back to their village. They came back to their country. They came to Israel and what did they do there? They talked about it. They talked about their experiences- most of them, not all- most of them talked about their experiences with their friends, with their family constantly talked about it. They were here. And over time, it helped them move on and continue. So the best advice from this study, you know that, as I told you, I am not going to teach you much new in this course. Just want to remind you how helpful it is to have support group. How helpful it is to

share with friends, with family, with a therapist, with a journal, in writing.

We'll talk about journaling next week- you know the most effective interventions both for positive as well as negative experiences- only we are writing in different way: one we analyze; the other, we simply replay. Being grateful shouldn't wait for Thanksgiving. We shouldn't wait just once a year, that November date, when we express gratitude, when we go around the table and say what we are grateful for. It should be a habit. A, because it works, it helps. And B, because it's moral. This gets to a point that I'll repeat throughout the course, where the moral is also the practical. The practical, in most cases, is also the moral. They go hand in hand.

David Steindl-Rast, What brings fulfillment is gratefulness, the simple response of our heart Again, just like a child. The poet, Galway Kinnel: Cicero: —Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, I thought about this sentence a lot which I love, but why? Because if you think about it, if we are not grateful, then we take things for granted. If we are not grateful for the good things in our lives, things are taken for granted. And then we are blind to them. Then as far as we are concerned, they do not

exist. Now what makes virtue virtuous? It's the good. And if there is no good in our world, then that takes away the virtue from being virtuous. That is why I think... what Cicero was talking about when he meant "it is the parent of all virtues". Another concernment benefit finder is the Radcliff student, or was a Radcliff student, Helen Keller. Helen Keller, quite literally, open our eyes and get us appreciate what is all around us.

She tells us a story in her wonderful autobiography about a friend who came to visit her once in Cambridge. There were many more woods at the time. And the friend walked around the woods and when her friend came back, Helen Keller asked her, "so what did you see? What did you note?", to which her friend responded, "well, nothing in particular." And Helen Keller

responds to that "nothing in particular" in her

autobiography. Let me read. —I wondered how it was possible to walk for an hour

through the woods and see nothing of note. I who cannot see find hundreds of things: the delicate symmetry of a leaf, the smooth skin of a silver birch, the rough, shaggy bark of a pine. I who am blind can give one hint to those who see: use your eyes as if tomorrow you will have been stricken blind. Hear the music of voices, the songs of a bird, the mighty strains of an orchestra as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. Touch each object as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if tomorrow you could never taste or smell again. Make the most of every sense. Glory in all the facets and pleasures and beauty. Take a minute twice a day to focus on what is going on around you. Take a minute when... on your way to class to look at the beautiful grass, the beautiful trees, the beautiful snow. Take a minute in the evening to reflect and think about the day you had, and to write down the things for which you are grateful. Today over lunch, just by a little bit slower than you do normally and taste, experience the taste.

Because it is a privilege to have the food that we have. It is a privilege to have the friends that we have. the family that we have. And we shouldn't take that privilege for granted. Because what we don't appreciate unfortunately depreciates. We don't need to wait for a threat, for a tragedy, for us to appreciate what's all around us and within us. What reminds me constantly, my surrounding, the reminder that I have always in front of my eyes, is a picture of my family and particularly, of my grandmother in the middle. And here's my grandfather who saw her coming in stooped, ill and took her into his arms. I have this picture in my office. Looked at it all the time to remind me. I would have told you the story now which comes at the end of the lecture. But I know when I tell the story, it drains me so much. I don't think I would be able to go on. So I told you at the end of the lecture last time. But this is my reminder. This is what primes me, creating a positive environment- primes me and

So here is what I want to do now. What I want to do now is take a time in. The first time in of the semester, not the last one. Time in when you have a chance to look inside yourself, to reflect. You'll have opportunity in sections as well. I want to do it now in this room. I want you to take just a couple of minutes to think about and write down mindfully the things for which you are grateful. The wonderful things in your life. So take two minutes to do it. (Time in) Ok. It would be great if you continue this later on as well. But I want to do something else now. Something slightly embarrassing. My apologies in advance. But what I'd like you to do now is share with the person next to you some... You don't need to share everything. And you can have some beeps in middle if you want to have censorship. That's fine. But just take couple of minutes to share with one another, with the person next to you or if there are three of you, just share quickly. I am just going to give you two minutes for that. The things for which you are grateful. You can elaborate on one thing or you can read the list.

(Students talking)

Take 30 seconds more. 30 seconds more to finish up. OK. OK. You... You can continue later. I recommend you continue later. Very simple intervention that goes a long way. If we just learn to focus on the positive, we co-create the more positive reality. What I want to do now before moving on to the next lecture on change. I want to say a few words about the final project. Remember the idea of the final project is basically a presentation anywhere between 20 to 30 minutes that you will create. This is both for the extension school as well as for the college students. w0-30 minute presentation that you will hand in as, or about any topic within positive psychology. And by the way, that could also be positive psychological interventions for depression or anxiety. It could be about gratitude. It could be the mind body connection. It could be about spirituality and religion. It could be about self-esteem. What I would urge you to do is find the most personally meaningful topic that you want to research.

Remember what is the most personal is also most general. So if you are very much interested, passionate in spirituality, do that. If you really want to understand more and be able to apply to your life more, positive psychological interventions for, I don't know, public speaking anxiety or whatever it is, do it on that.

The more personal you get in that, in that paper, the more you'll get out of it. You'll hand it in as a written text. 20 to 30 minutes is about 10 to 15 pages of texts and this is what you'll ultimately hand in. You'll give both a written text as well as slides. We are not going to grade for how beautiful and how amazing your powerpoints... But we do want you to hand in slides that will be the outline for your talk. Now the only part of this that will be actually graded is what you hand in at the end, meaning the text of your lecture. However, in addition to that, the powerpoint will be graded pass/fail, meaning you have to do it. but you are not going to be graded for it, is to give the presentation to other people from your section. Those of you in extension school will give to other people in your community.

The idea here is paying it forward. Getting an idea and doing it. That's how I actually started my speaking career. I had a topic that I was personally interested and I gave it to the squash team. I talked about it. Just to people close to me. And I had a topic and then that evolved over time. So we want you ,for those of you who haven't had the experience is to first of all synthesize material in the topic that you care about, that you think will make a difference in your life; and second to be able to pay it forward. It has to have reference to research. This is not just a personal story or an autobiography. It has to have reference to research. In addition to, of course stories that you think capture the point. Probably the most effective way of communicating an idea is through stories. You know, you'll probably not remember ten years from now, the research on self-efficacy. But you are much more likely to remember the story of Roger Bannister. So people remember stories. They connect to stories. But at

the same time, this is an academic paper.

We want to bridge the Ivory tower and the Main Street. So have references to research. And these are the things that would be optionally: you can have film clips- if you have a film clip in it, it's a 10 minute film clip, it doesn't count as part of the 10 to

30 minutes. Especially if you have 20 minute film clip unless you are giving a lecture, which is fine. And include exercise. So if this is a workshop, what exercise would you do? Would you have, you know participants express gratitude to one another? Would you have them writing a journal? Would you have them go out and exercise physically later? So include exercises as well. Here are the dates. So this is em... These are your deadlines, or rather, your lifelines in this project. March 20th, just before spring break, all you need to do is let your TF know your topic. One word, one sentence- it's gratitude. It's spirituality. It's mind-body. Specifically physical exercise. Just let them know. Now you may change that a week later or two weeks later. But we just want you to start honing and thinking about what your likely topic will be. So that's March 20.

April 7- give you some time after spring break, so you don't have to work on it over spring break, though we hope you'll at least think about it and read some stuff over spring break. April 7: one page outline. A draft of your topic. Again, this is not graded. This is just for you, meaning pass/fail. So you have to hand it in. Just for you. Then you can talk to your teaching fellow about it. By May 3, give the presentation to at least three or four classmates. If you are in extension school, give it to other people. And ask them for feedback. And you'll get feedback- ideally, written feedback. We'll talk to you about the process later on when the time comes. Again, this is not graded. It's for you. It's for you as well as for the participants, because you are paying it forward. It can be a rough draft. It is a rough draft. And I'll give you feedback and say, "you know, what I thought was missing is maybe an extra story or I felt like you were

not grounded enough in research." Or, you know, "introduce a little bit more energy." Or whatever it is. Get feedback from them to help you. And then the week later, the final project will be due. Any questions about this? If you have a question, probably others have the same questions. So any questions about the final project? Ok. Think about it. Yes. Question.

No, it's not in section. You will actually... Ok. So the question is where do you make the presentation. You'll have to get together with your group, the other three or four, probably be three. And give each other the presentation. If you want to do it with powerpoints and the whole thing, that's perfectly fine. If you just want to read it or speak it, that's perfectly fine too. Your choice is whatever you think would be most helpful to you. Again, this project is for you. It's for you and for others hopefully who will benefit from hearing what you have to say. Students who have done it- we've already done it for the last two years. The first year I taught it- we just had a regular

paper. And the students enjoy this process so much more and get so much more out of it and it stays with them. Because it's something you can take, again, pay forward also when you are done here. Other questions? Yes. Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar: Yes. Good question.

So are you supposed to narrow down a topic as opposed to being very general life spirituality? Up to you. Up to you. You can give an overview and then, at the end of your presentation, say, you know, these are some of the interesting studies, but if you want more information, you know, you can look there. Or you can do something very particular. So the benefit of church going. Or the benefit of Arabic exercise. It can be very specific or much more... Or the benefit, psychological benefit of Arabic exercise. So it can be very specific or very general. Up to you. Whatever you think would be more interesting to you. And what often happens when we found this is that once you get into the literature, you are going through info- you'll read a lot of studies

there. That's when you understand, "OK, I have so much material on just this specific point I am going to focus here." Or I really want an overview of this whole topic. And then in later presentations, or I'll create a whole class just based on this topic later on. Or website. There are actually many students who created websites based on their projects. There was another hand up there. Or were you just saying hi? Hi. Yes. They can't hear you. For extension students all over the world, you are going to pick two or three people anywhere, family, friends, whoever it is but people who will be "beautiful enemies" to you, who will give you real feedback. Because they care about you. Good. Alright. No one else? Alright, if you have further questions, ask your TF or ask me. (A student sneezes.) Bless you.

Change. In many ways, we've been talking about change the whole class. This class is about change, as I said on the first class, I wouldn't be teaching it if I didn't think people could change. And when I talk change, I am talking about different levels. Whether the change in terms of introducing a habit: I want to start exercising for three times a week. Why? Because as you'll see from a few weeks from now, exercising three times a week has the same effect as some of our most powerful psychiatric drugs. Or let's say habit you want to introduce is you know, I want to introduce spirituality to my life. Or change could be "I want to be happier". I want to experience less anxiety. General anxiety or specific anxiety, before tests. Whatever the change you want to introduce to in your life, there are certain patterns, certain approaches that work, certain approaches that don't work. What we are going to do next two classes, two and a half classes is differentiate what works and what doesn't so that you can apply it to your life.

So first of all, we've talked a lot about change. Let's recap some of the things that we discussed. First of all, on the second class we already mentioned this, that change is hard. And there are a lot of studies to show how hard change is. The twin research.

Remember the conclusion. Try and change your happiness is as difficult and futile as trying to change your height. Now even though they went back on their word and they said "well it's not

really impossible and futile", still what they did show in their studies is that it is very hard. The twin studies. Happiness is a stochastic phenomenon. Then Daniel Gilbert's work on affective forecasting. Yeah we experience it an up after we get tenure or after we get into Harvard, and we experience a down when we are rejected by whatever it is. But then very quickly we go back up to our base level of wellbeing. And most of our life looks like this around this straight base level. It's very difficult to get an upward trajectory. It's possible through coping for example, but it's difficult.

The Cambridge-Somerville study- 5 year intervention that ultimately led to negative change, whether there's more alcoholism among the people who did go through that intervention with bright in the best. Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, programs. So we know change is hard, whether it's on the individual level or on the society level. However, we also know the change is possible. We know that many of the people who argue that change is not possible are making the error of the average, looking at the average score as opposed to out-layers, as opposed to people who have introduced change. And when we study change, it's the exception that proves the rule. So if change is possible and some people have been able to change whether it's through therapy, whether it's by reading a book, whether it's being a part of the class, whether it's through conversation- sometimes it's a single sentence that makes a difference to their entire life, they are the exceptions. But the questions are no longer whether or not change is possible. The question is "how is change possible". And this is the question we are going to address in much greater depth on a higher level of the spiral in these lectures.

What does change look like? Let's go micro here. Let's go to the brain level. How

does change actually look like? What happens in our brain when change occurs? Until

1998, neuro scientists thought that the brain was essentially fixed. We are born with certain neurones, certain pathways. The brain doesn't grow, doesn't change pass the age of, say three. Maybe first a few experiences the brain still changes and evolves. But after the age of three, no change. And this theory which was held until 1998- I mean that's not so long ago, this theory gave credence, and actually proved positive for "happiness is a stochastic phenomenon". You are born with certain genes. You are born with certain inclinations with certain neurone pathways. You have a few experiences that really affect you a great deal, as Freud argued. And then the rest of your life, you are going to just fluctuate around that same level. No change. That was until 1998.

In 1998, scientists started to notice that the brain actually does change. And they came up with the concept of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity are neurones are plastic- they change. Not only that, not only do the pathways change in the brain- and we'll look at it in a minute, but also they've come up with another concept, which is neurogenesis. Neurones develop, are created throughout our lives until the day we die potentially. So it's not the fact that we are born with certain number of neurones and it's downhill from there, as conventional wisdom had us to believe- as many

people still believe today. No, neurones are developed and grow, emerge throughout our lives. The brain, it turns out, in many ways is like muscle: use it and you don't lose it. Use it and you generate, you build the muscle up. And the question is how do we use it so that it becomes an assistant in a way, help toward becoming happier. So let's look at what the brain actually look like.

What it looks like is that there are millions of channels inside, neural pathways, connections between different neurones in brain that look something like this. As you can see, some are very thin, are relatively new. some are much thicker, much more

established. And the way it works in many ways is like in nature. You have large rivers, large channels. And you have tiny rivers and tiny channels. And what happens is that every time a connection is made between neurones- in other words, your thought pattern follows a certain path. That path grows. Just like a river- every time the water passes there, it gets this much ,this much wider. And when there is no water there, there is no work being done in the neurone, metaphorically speaking, t shrinks a little bit. So neural pathways grow with use and they shrink when there is no use. If it's something new, a new neural pathway that was just created because remember- there's neuroplasticity. Neural pathways are created constantly. There is neurogenesis. New neutrones are created constantly. Initially it's very thin. Let's say for example, I study French. And I learn a new word. A new connection is made in my brain. Now if I hear the word once and never again, the neural pathway will disintegrate, will disappear.

However, if I continue hearing that word over and over and over again, after all it will become thicker and thicker. Ok this is a way over simplification of the real process. But it will become thicker. And then I'll remember it for the rest of my life. It will be established like a river that is established, as opposed to a tiny stream and trickle that can disappear in a day. And here is the key aspect for understanding how we can change our thought, how we can change our wellbeing ultimately. The neural pathways are self-reinforcing, just like rivers are. Think about it: when it rains, when there is a down pour, the water gravitates toward the existing river, toward the channels, toward the drains that we have built. It's much less likely to create a new river or a new stream with there's nothing before. So the experience is much likely to gravitate to already established neural pathways and strengthen it further, as opposed to create new neural pathways, which is why if we want to remember something, it's very good to make connections to other things, to existing neural pathways, to existing memories.

Let me explain this again, because this is important to understand. Because understanding this can actually... this is something that Carol Dweck, professor at Stanford showed and understanding this neuroplasticity, understanding how we actually can change can make us more likely to succeed in one of the ways of success- to actually become happier. So it's important to understand. And established neural pathway attracts more action and it attracts more action and gets thicker. Something that's not established, a tiny little stream is more likely to be just wiped away.

As it grows more, it's more likely to stay, not just stay, grow even more. It is self-reinforcing. And this is what habits are. When something is reinforced over and over again, it becomes a habit. For example, you play tennis and you hit the forehand over and over and over again. Initially you have to think about it. You have to concentrate. You have to, you know, maybe cock your wrist a little bit, maybe understand exactly where you stop the racket, but after a while, after doing it hundreds of, thousands of times you don't need to think about it anymore. It's already grooved. And the word that I used is grooved, specifically because you essentially created a new channel. And whenever a ball comes toward you, automatically you don't even need to think about it. It gravitates. Your mind gravitates toward that particular path or paths, many paths that tell you "lift it up and hit". It's automatic. Same with music. And what it has shown is people who practice music regularly or practice a sport regularly, their brain actually changes its shape. More neural pathways are created around these areas that mean "let me play a C now" or "let me move my fingers in this way" based on something that I see on the page. Certain neural pathways are created, and the brain actually becomes thicker in these areas. Or more experience flow in: the more we do it, the more they flow. Until it becomes grooved and I don't need to think about how to play C-.

It's automatic.

They did a research. This was the first research, one of the first research projects where they found the brain actually changes. They took taxi drivers or freshly minted taxi drivers from London. And what they had to do, to become, to get their certificate, their approval, they had to study the map of London. Now the map of London is much more complicated than study the map of New York. Those of you who have been to London. But they studied and they spent a lot of time. What they found was the brain, part of their visual cortex actually changed from before they started to study the maps of London to after. Because they were working that part of the brain. They had experiences. And these experiences created grooves inside their brain, so when someone said "Oxford Circus", immediately they knew what street they need to take to Oxford Circus. Their brain actually became bigger. It changed their neuroplasticity. And that's wonderful news. It's really wonderful news.

Because it means we have control. And we can introduce change. Now in our brain, there are both healthy and unhealthy pathways. So for example, some of the negative channels may be one of the constant worrier- someone who worries a lot. That every time something happens, immediately they gravitate to "ok so what does that mean for the future?" Or "what does that mean now for my prospects?" "What does it mean for today?" Constantly worrying about things. Even good things very often. They immediately interpret it as something to be worry about. Or fault finding. That's pathways in the brain where I look for- again they are self-reinforcing- I begin to look for in my world things that go wrong.

Remember my personal experience where I got the fellowship as a senior here. And I got the fellowship and immediately my brain gravitated toward "Ok but why didn't I get the other one?" I had so many things to be grateful for. But it's the fault finder immediately the neural pathway, the river this experience fell into was the largest one. And the largest one for me at that time was being a fault finder. Then

there are positive channels as well. What are the positive channels? Benefit finder. A person who is able to find benefit even in the hard circumstances. May not say that the things happen for the best, but something, but people made the best of things happen. The optimist. Again, much larger, much wider channels for optimism. And the experiences gravitate toward there. Today we know much more how the brain works. And where these channels exist?

so let me give you an example of the one of the things we know. One of the things that we know is that people who have more action on the left side of the prefrontal cortex, compared to the right side of the prefrontal cortex, are general happier. More susceptible to positive emotions, more resilient in phase of painful emotions. More activation here- prefrontal cortex, compared to the right side of the prefrontal cortex. People who have more activation on the right side compared to the left of the prefrontal cortex are generally more depressed. Now we know that today because we have FMRI, because we have EEG. We can see how much the brain works on each side. But we knew that already hundreds of years ago. We knew that this side is associated with positive emotions, and more activation on this side of the front, is associated with painful emotions.

How? Because when people, for example were in an accident, and the accident happened to them and the left side of the prefrontal cortex was damaged, very often they became more depressed. Because they had more activation on the right side as a result. In comparison, people who had an accident on the right side on the other hand, on the right side, very often, became happier. Now I don't recommend this as an intervention. Don't try it at home without your parents or with your parents. However, if you walk in the street, and you happen to fall, it's always better to fall this way. So just keep that in mind. Important thing to keep in mind then is that very often the same trigger causes very different reactions. Again the world is not just the external

world. It's also the internal world. Remember to the same mind, as Emerson said, the same world can be... or to the different minds, the same world can be a heaven or a hell. Depends on what that experience gravitates toward. Over the years, I've become a much more, much more of a benefit finder through the exercise, through thinking about it, by writing, keeping a journal, by physically exercising, I become much more of a benefit finder. I've done a lot of work in that.

One of the great fortunes in my life is that I married a consummate benefit finder. Tommy, my wife doesn't have to work that hard at it. So for example, we would come back from a party. And there was someone at the party who couldn't stop talking. Have you encountered a person... Well, couldn't stop talking. And I just about to tell Tommy you know, this person just couldn't shut

his or her mouth. And what would she say before I open my mouth? She said, "see how wonderful that person was and he or she is so passionate about what they do?" So for me, it was talkative. For her, it was passion. Again, automatically going there. There is a genetic set point- and we'll talk about the genes- that lead some people to be much more benefit finders than others. But at the same time, we can work on it. We can work on it, pathway by pathway. And what we are doing there is quite literally transforming the brain. We'll talk about during the week on mindfulness meditation that meditation- for instance regular yoga- actually makes our.. changes the pathways in our brain, makes it more active on the left side compared to the right side. Makes it more susceptible to positive emotions, more resilient to the phase of painful emotions.

We can change the brain. Neuroplasticity and neurogenesis. We are going to talk about two types of change in this next week. The first type of change is the gradual approach. This is the change of gradually chipping away excess stone. This is the change that we see in nature with the water sweeping away the stone, making it thinner over time, making it smoother. The gradual change. This is the change we

mostly see in the world. It's the healthy change. There is no quick fix. It takes time. However, the change process can be as enjoyable as the outcome. Think about how to learn to play musical instrument. It takes time. It's by the way the same process, because we are creating new neural pathways in our brain, when we are learning musical instrument. We can enjoy the process that ten years that it takes us to get to play in a concert in Leverett JCR.

We can enjoy the process of getting there before we are there. So the change process in and of itself can also be fun. We can enjoy the journey as well as the destination. It takes time. A lot of time. Then there is also the acute approach to change. You know if the metaphor for the gradual change was the water breaking down stone, the metaphor for acute approach is taking a sledgehammer and breaking the water, breaking the stone. You know what Moses did. The acute change. Takes... Doesn't take much time. It happens immediately. But the important thing to keep in mind, with the acute change is it's not a quick fix. The acute change, very often, takes a lot of preparation, metaphorically speaking- You need a lot of strength to pick up the hammer and to have the power to put it down. So it takes time. Both take time. And that's important to keep in mind. Why?

Martin Seligman: —The belief that we can rely on shortcuts to gratification and bypass the exercise of personal strengths and virtues is folly. It leads to legions of humanity who are depressed in the middle of great wealth and are starving to death spiritually." This is one of the main reasons for the unhappiness in the world today. I alluded to it but I want to elaborate it a little bit more before we end. How many here

have read, by the way, the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey. Ok. Quite a few. It's a wonderful book. One of the best, if not the best self-help books out there. Stephen Covey at the beginning of the book talks about the research that he did for his PHD. And what he

did was look at the success literature of the last 200

years. And what he found was that there was a real cut-off point in 1930 Until

1930, 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, self-help was about character change.

It was about changing who you are from inside. It was about struggling in hard work and failing and going, getting up again. Going through hardships. And changing step by step, slowly, gradually. 1930- radical change. From character change, it became quick fix. Thinking grow rich. How to win friends in influential people. Do it now. The secret- quick change, immediate change, easy change. And from the 1930s, what we see is a decline in people's level of well being. Much more depression. Much more anxiety. And one of the reasons is that. That people hope and believe that they can find quick fix. There is no quick fix. It takes time. It takes time to change. However, the change process can be as enjoyable, as fun, as exciting as ultimately achieving the change. And next week we'll talk about that wonderful process. Have a good weekend.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 10

Hi! Good morning! So today's lecture is about change. And things are going to change today. Our relationship is going to change today. So stay tuned.

Last time, last time we ended by talking about the different kinds of change. The first approach—the gradual approach, like water wearing down stone, chipping away gradually slowly taking our time. The second approach—the acute change, the sledge hammer breaking stone creating a new pathway, a new channel. The important thing to keep in mind with both forms of changes, with all forms of changes, lasting change that is—which is what we are about—not just the spike and the return to base level. The thing to keep in mind about change is that neither is quick-fix. Even when we pick up that sledge hammer, even when we pick it up, we need to do a lot of work before the preparation. So for example, gradual change, slow change would be doing the gratitude exercise every day, slowly becoming more and more of a benefit finder, gradually looking more at the positive, creating a new neural pathway neuron by neuron.

Remember neuroplasticity and neurogenesis—two very important concepts. Because just by knowing by understanding that our brain changes in and of itself makes us more likely to change. And this is work done by Carol Dweck, whom I'll discuss in future courses when we discuss perfectionism. And then the sledge hammer example is like the Eureka experience—the great insight that doesn't come in a vacuum. It comes after a lot of

hard work after a lot of preparation. You know the

99% of perspiration that leads to that inspiration. So no quick-fix. And the belief in quick-fix, the expectation of the quick-fix—that is one of the reasons why levels of the depression are so high today. Because people are frustrated. They are disappointed.

They think there's something wrong with them when they don't succeed in the quick-fix. But they have just...I just write in the book that it's possible if I do these

five things, I'd be happy for the rest of my life. And I do these five things, and I'm not happier. And I begin to question myself. No quick-fix. It takes time. No five easy steps to happiness.

Before we go to the change process, there are a few things we need to understand. The first thing to understand is this—do I, do you really want to change? And it's not a trivial question. It is not a rhetorical question because very often on the conscious level we may be saying yes, but on the subconscious level something is stopping us.

Let me show you an example. So this is the study done by Langer and...and Thompson back in the 80s. And here is what they did. They brought students in or participants in. And they asked them whether they wanted to get rid of certain characteristics, like rigidity or being gullible or grimness. And they asked them whether they wanted to get rid of these characteristics and whether they succeeded in becoming better in this area. Were you able to introduce change, so were you able to actually become less rigid, if this was important for you to change, or less gullible, or less grim? So this is the first two questions that they asked. Did you want to improve

it? Did you wanna change this? And then after, they answered these questions. There was the second part of the study where they asked them to evaluate the positive...the following positive characteristics. Consistency, is it important to you? Is it important to you to be trustworthy? And how important it is for you to be and to be perceived as a serious person? And here is the interesting finding of this research. Those individuals who rated the positive traits—the ones in yellow who rated them high—as personally important to them were less likely to change the negatives. Do you understand implications of the study? Let's say I do wanna get rid of rigidity. I don't

like being rigid. However, at the same time, consistency is a very important value to me. I'm less likely to change my rigidity because they are associated in my mind. And yeah, I don't want to be rigid. But at the same time subconscious is talking here—I

them together. Not wanting to get rid of one because I don't want the baby out with the bath water. And to me they are linked. The same with gullibility and trustworthiness. We can say that the other side of gullibility someone who's trustworthy. Now going to the extreme. I become gullible. However, I don't get rid of my gullibility because I don't want to also get rid of my trustworthiness. Same with grim. I may be grim but that's also subconsciously a sign of my seriousness.

You know for years, literally years, when I've been thinking and writing and analyzing the notion

of perfectionism, I couldn't understand why it didn't get better, for very long time. Because I knew perfectionism was hurting me. I read the research. I look through personal experiences. I knew it was hurting me in terms of my well-being for sure, but also in the long term in terms of my success. And yet I couldn't get rid of perfectionism until I read the study. And I asked myself, What's tied in my mind? What goes hand in hand is drive and ambition. And if I had to define myself—this is one of the first things—and because I didn't want to lose these

characteristics, my subconscious didn't let me, stopped me from getting rid of the perfectionism, perfectionism which I define as a debilitating fear of failure. We'll have a whole week on perfectionism. So we'll get more in depth if you'll understand what it means. And it was only once I understood that for me these two things go hand in hand, I was able to unpack them to distinguish them. I said I want to keep one not the other. Or for example, worry and anxiety. Look I've mentioned these many times before, next time I'll talk to you about the process that I underwent to overcome anxiety.

Part of me since the time I can't remember myself being anxious whether it's before matches in squash, whether it's before exams, whether it's before speaking up in section when I was an undergrad. And I wanted to stop that. I didn't want that. However, I didn't let go of worry and anxiety because I also sort with responsibility.

Well if I'm anxious, it can mean I'm responsible. So I prepare for class much more as opposed to just let go and become a slacker. So I associated a positive trait which is responsibility. And remember Brandon? No one is coming very important trait—responsibility. But that prevented me from letting go—subconscious level, not

conscious of the worry and anxiety that I often experienced.

Guilt, again there is good guilt, there is bad guilt. You know it is. Well, I don't want to get rid of guilt because what that means I'm not being empathic and sensitive toward other people. Very often we connect the two. They go hand in hand. Another couple is the notion of simplifying. This is something very personal to me. I wanted to do less because I knew that taking on too many activities was actually hurting me...was hurting my productivity, creativity, well-being. I couldn't simplify. Why?

Because I associate it in my mind with losing my edge. So I didn't let go. Or fault-finding—we talked about this a week ago. Why do people not let go of fault-finding? Why do they remain pessimistic? Because they connect it with the sense of realism. I don't wanna stop being realistic. I don't wanna be one of those detached Pollyannas. And therefore I don't let go of my fault-finding.

Happiness. One of the most significant barrier to people's happiness is that they associate happiness with slacking off, because the dominant paradigm. If I'm happy now, I ignore experiencing pain. It means I'm letting go. It means I'm not gonna be successful. It means I'm gonna lose my edge. It means I'm gonna lose my drive and ambition. So our subconscious prefers to keep...keep us unhappy, so that we don't lose the other things that we value highly, things such as ambition, things such as

having an edge, things such as our hard work. Now of course, when we look at them we know that they don't necessarily have to go hand in hand. On the contrary, for example, happiness, we know from the broaden and build theory—the positive emotions are actually associated with higher levels of success—whereas I'll talk about

after spring break, when we talk about perfectionism. We know from research, you'll be able to connect it also in the person. Many of you will be able to connect it in the personal level. We know that letting go of this fear of failure and coping, putting

ourselves on the line more, learning from failures looking at it as a...as a stepping

stone that contributes to our success in the long term. It doesn't need to take away from our drive and ambition on the contrary. And the key if we wanna overcome this fear of failure or the worry/anxiety, or the guilt, or the slack of happiness, or getting a better understanding of these characteristics.

For example, understanding that I want to let go of my fear of failure, the debilitating fear of failure, not just fear of failure, because every one is afraid of failure to some extent, but to let go of the debilitating fear of failure and yet maintain my drive or ambition. So more in nuance understanding that you need to go hand in hand. Or, I can't, you know, I never used to be able to say no to people. You know, such a short word, such an easy word, so difficult at times to say. Why? Because I see myself and now I want other people to see me as empathic as sensitive as under...as a

nice guy. And then I unpack the two. And it really doesn't have to hand in hand. I can say no to people very sensitively because very often when I say yes to others, I'm saying no to myself, and in the long term, very often to the relationship. So now I had a better more nuance understanding of when I can say no and when I don't want to say no while maintaining my sensitivity and my empathy without experiencing the same levels of guilt that I experienced before whenever I said no. And the same you can do for every one of these, of these characteristics. So think about what if you wanted to change for a very long time and weren't successful in. Was it perfectionism? Was it, you know, this very serious grimness? And you wanted to be more playful? Well maybe you didn't want to get rid of it because you were afraid of losing your seriousness. And you don't need to. The baby can stay, the bath water can go if we have a more nuance understanding of what it is we want to change.

In section next week, you are going to do an exercise with your teaching fellows called sentence

completion. In that exercise, this is exactly what you are going to do, you're going to identify. It's...it's an exercise devised by Nathaniel Branden. You're

going to do an exercise that will help you identify what you wanna get rid of and what you wanna keep. Very often, that...just that switch that you make in your mind, subconscious as well as conscious mind can open the flood waters, the gates to a new channel, new pathway in our brain, real lasting change.

We're gonna discuss three distinct, the interconnected pathways to change—the ABCs of psychology which we have mentioned before. The ABCs—the A is the affect, the emotion. The B is the behavior, the action. And C is the cognition, the thought. And what we gonna do is we're going to talk about each one of the three. And for each one we're going to talk about the gradual change approach and the acute change approach. So in a sense we're building a three by two. Affect, behavior, cognition times gradual and the acute. And we're going to talk about six different approaches to change. These six approaches to change are interconnected. It's important to connect

them. And ideally we want all three. Why? Quote it up, we used it a few times and we'll use it again, John Dryden, British poet—In order to change a habit, in order to bring about lasting change, we need to have as much of a solid approach as much...um...force in the intervention. It's not just enough to focus on the emotions. It's not just enough to focus on action. It's not enough just to focus on our thinking. We want to focus on the three—the A, the B, and the C. It's...Think about it. It's like a habit can be looked as a flood. There's flood in our mind of certain neurons firing in certain neuron pathway. And what we want to do is to overcome this flood. And to

overcome this flood we need as much force as we can, therefore we want to use as many approaches as we can.

Before we jump into the A, one more thing—what do we want to change? What can

we change? And what can we not change? So according to researchers led by the lights of as we're to explain an individual's happiness, we need to look at the three factors. The first factor is the genetic set range, not genetic set point, it's a range. We're all born with certain predisposition toward happiness and well-being. Some people are born more with, you know, the smiley face with the smiley spoon in their mouth; others less so. And we're all somewhere on this, you know bell curve, some people luckier than others. As I mentioned couple of times before, I wasn't born that

lucky. I was born more on the anxious side of this curve not with the...with the happy

spoon in my mouth, which by the way I think helps me teach this class, because I do these things, I apply these things, I make a difference in my life. you know, been there, done that, doing it. I can speak from personal experiences as you know. Now some people may look at it and say. Well, my answer to that is...it's not terri...it's not good.

It's not bad. It is the law of gravity. It's not good it's not bad. It is and nature to be commanded must be obeyed. We need to look at our nature, understand it and then make the best of it.

About 50 percent of our levels of well-being of the variance in explaining happiness can't be accounted for by genes, which explains some of the results, or for example, the twin studies. Why there were such similarities among the twins even if they were, or between the twins, even if they were real depart. Because genes matter. Not good, not bad. It is. They matter 50 percent, not 100 percent—thank God—but 50 percent of the variance. The important thing to keep in mind is that we have a lot of control what we do with these genes, and I'm just throwing out numbers. I don't know what it is exactly. But successful basketball players is determined 50 percent by genes

in terms of how much fast twitch versus slow twitch they have in their muscles, or how high they can jump, how coordinated they are, how tall they are. All these things matter. However, if Michael Jordan hadn't worked on his basketball, I would be a better player than he is. If he didn't work on his basketball at all, and I did and do. In

other words, also with genes, people who don't work on their happiness even if they have the best of genes will not do as well as people with less happy genes who work on it. So work matters a great deal.

The second thing that matters which makes up the hundred percent of variance of happiness is external circumstances. Of course, external circumstances make a lot of difference, whether we're living in a free country versus oppression. That makes a lot of difference. However, in general, external circumstances beyond the extremes, beyond being homeless on the street make very little difference, in fact, about 10% of the total variance. So genetic genes 50%, external circumstances such as place of residence, such as income, such as weather—and again not for people, for example,

who have seasonal affective disorder. Then of course it matters whether we get sun or not. I'm talking about...um...most people, not people with SAD. So out of these extremes, external circumstances make, matter about 10%, not much.

The third thing, the rest of the 40% is accounted for by intentional activities. What that means is what we do, how we act, what we think about, how we interpret the world, what we focus on. In essence, what 1504 is about. What we have discussed since the first class, what we're gonna discuss even more in the second half of the semester. These intentional activities, our focus, these are essentially our ABCs. This is what real meaningful change comes. And this is where we are gonna focus. It would be nice if we could do something with our genes. It would be nice. Cannot. It would be nice if we had more control of our external circumstances. But even if we did and many people do, many people sitting in this room or watching at home, do have more control doesn't make that much of the difference. What makes the most difference that we have control

over are the internal activities, our interpretation of the world and our action. So let's jump into it.

logical connection—linguistic connection between emotion, motivation, motion. Emotion to move away. Without emotion we wouldn't move. You read about it in the book. Or you will read about it in the book about Elliott, who just lost his emotional faculty and with it lost all motivation to act or do anything even though his cognition was in place. We need emotion in order to move. So I wanna talk about again, two

aspects within emotion. The first—gradual change. The Second—more acute change.

The gradual change is a mindful meditation. Mindful meditation is arguably the most powerful intervention for bringing about calm and equanimity. A lot of research on it, we're gonna spend a whole week talking about it. Today what I wanna do is just to introduce it, the basic, the foundation of the spiral of mindfulness.

Jon Kabatt-Zin who in many ways is responsible for bringing serious research into this realm. He along with people like Tara Bennett-Goleman, people like Herbert Benson from the medical school here, brought serious research to this what was considered a mystical field. —Cultivating mindfulness can lead to the discovery of deep realms of relaxation, calmness and insight within yourself. The path to it in any

moment lies no farther than your own body This is the amazing thing about mindfulness. || When we talk about research, quite literally mind-boggling, I mean they change the way our mind works, transform our brain just by focusing on the breath, by focusing on parts of our body, by being present. "All of us have the capacity to be mindful. All it involves is cultivating our ability to pay attention in the present moment." Let's experience it just for a minute or two. So here is what I'd like you to do once again if you feel comfortable with it. So sit back on your...on your chair with your back against...against the back rest. Make yourself as comfortable as

you can. Plant both feet on the ground comfortably. And if you feel comfortable, if you feel comfortable, just close your eyes. And move your attention to your breathing. Take a deep breath in, into your belly. Slow, quiet, gentle exhalation. Deep slow

mind wanders, just return to your breathing. Now in your mind's eye, just scan your body—your forehead, your eyes, your nose, mouth, your neck, your chest, your upper back, lower back, your legs, all the way down to your feet. Just scan your body while

continuing to breathe deeply, slowly and gently. And through your scan, find a part of your body that is a little bit more tense than the others. It could be your jaws. It could be your neck. It could be your shoulders, your stomach. You're feeling a little bit of disease. Could be your legs, your knees, your feet. Identify that one part of the body that is a little bit more tense than the others and focus on it and continue to breathe. Take a deep breath into that part of your body. And when you let go and you exhale, also let go of the tension that's there. Just relax it. And take a few deep breath into that part of your body and relax it and let go. Return your focus to your breathing. Take a deep breath in. Slow gentle quiet long exhale, relaxing with the exhalation. Deep breathing in, deep slow gentle long exhaling. At the end of the next exhalation, gently slowly quietly open your

eyes. Once again if the person next to you is asleep, just gently wake them up. If someone is speaking in their sleep, please wake them up.

—Mindfulness means seeing things as they are, without trying to change them. The point is to dissolve our reactions to disturbing emotions, This is what permission to be human is all about. || Along the emotion, experiencing the emotion, and just breathing through it. And very often when we do that—not always, but very often—it dissolves. And with it, with the emotional dissolution of the emotion comes also the psychological dissolution of this painful emotion. Again we'll talk much, much more about this very important intervention after spring break. This is about gradual change. What we'll see when we talk about research is that even if this is gradual change,

within as little as 8 weeks of regular meditation, our brain actually starts to change its form to transform. Our immune system strengthens after as little as 8 weeks of regular daily meditation. It doesn't have to be 5 hours a day. As little as 30 minutes or 20

that you'll take up as a life time, life long intervention.

Here is an example of more acute change when it comes to our emotion. So when I thought about filling in this box in the 3 by 2 model, how do I find the acute emotional change? Immediately my mind went to research in clinical psychology, specifically to

post-traumatic stress disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder—something that has been studied thousands and thousands of articles; research done in our department too. And when I look at it, I said: Because what

happens when we have a trauma, many people after the trauma are changed forever, for the rest of their lives if they have PTSD. It actually has changed...changes the chemical that flow through our brain. It changes the structure of our brain, creates new neural pathways, kills a lot of old neural pathways as a result of a single experience. It's a sledge hammer. It is very widespread unfortunately. I mentioned it last time. 30 percent of Vietnam vets have PTSD. 30 percent. 80 percent from the first Gulf War have PTSD. As I mention, we don't have the exact data yet from the second Gulf War. But the numbers are likely gonna be higher than that. After 911 or before 911 right there were 20,000 individuals with PTSD south of 110th street New York. Right after 911, 60,000 individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder. Now this has consequences. Again it has consequences on the way our brain functions, very often, not always, but very often for the rest of our lives. So this is an acute change. It comes immediately one trauma, 911 or seeing something terrible in war. And then that often has an effect for the rest of, for the per...for the entire life. It's a shock treatment, a negative shock treatment. Now when look at PTSD, when I thought about it, I asked...I mean this is clinical psychology.

First of all, a lot of research started only 1998, again 10 years ago, the time when positive psychology came in to the scene, research on post-traumatic growth. And what was found was that in fact more people experience growth as a result of a trauma

than post...than PTSD. However, we don't talk about post-traumatic growth. Everyone knows about PTSD. But again this is another example of where the light is not shed on something that is actually working well. And what is working here? Most people are extremely resilient able to withstand trauma. And that is a very empowering understanding to have. We'll become more of a self-fulfilling prophecy, and more people will experience post-traumatic growth if they only knew that it was a possibility that it was common. If they didn't feel guilty about experiencing growth as a result of trauma, how can I grow after what I saw, what I viewed, what I experienced in Vietnam. It's wrong. Again things don't happen for the best, but some people are able to make the best of things that happen. Post-traumatic growth, it happens when people begin to focus on the benefit.

So what is the benefit of this trauma? It didn't happen for the best. But what if I learn from my cancer, for example, well...to be closer to my family, to appreciate the breath, to appreciate the flowers, to enjoy my friends more. Didn't happen for the best. Benefit finding. Or many people are able to find meaning in it through journaling.

We'll talk about journaling next class. Or people who are able to share their experience of the trauma. Remember the difference between holocaust survivors and Vietnam vets? Holocaust survivors shared, talked about it, wrote about it. Vietnam vets ruminated about it.

Going back to the Lyubomirsky study. And when you just ruminate without sharing, without...without taking it out, it becomes stronger and it's more likely to become PTSD. But it doesn't always do that. And it's important to understand the magnetism of post-traumatic growth. So here is the question that I have. This is a positive psychology course. Remember what positive psychology is...is that it focuses on what works. So the question that I asked myself as I was preparing for this course was this—is there a positive equivalent to trauma, something that is so powerful yet

positive that will change the way our brain functions in an instance like a sledge hammer? Is there something like that? Or in other words, what I asked is, can a single positive experience create a positive channel that will lead to a permanent increase in wellbeing, calm and positive memories? In other words, the opposite of PTSD. And again asking you shall receive; a question begins a quest. And as soon as I ask this question, it open up channels that I didn't see before that were literally right in front of my eyes. And this was the work that I've studied for many years of one of my intellectual heroes—Abraham Maslow who talks about the peak experience. Now,

what I'm gonna talk about now is more hypothesis than well grounded research. It's a hypothesis that I hope some of you will, will research either here as your senior thesis, or in the future, or will encourage people to research these ideas. Everything that I share in this class is based on very rigorous research. This is one area where it's a hypothesis. But bear with me and see what you

think of it, of this hypothesis when I finish explaining it. Because there is some, some research on it, not enough you know, for a stand of approval yet. But think about it. Does it make sense?

So let's see what a peak experience is. Maslow's definition of a peak experience: for the happiest moments of life, for experiences of ecstasy, rapture, bliss of the greatest joy. I found that such experiences came from profound aesthetic experiences such as creative ecstasies, moments of mature love, perfect sexual experiences, parental love, experiences of natural childbirth and many others. Everyone or most of people have the experience, peak experiences again, whether it was with your girlfriend boyfriend, whether it was reading a book, whether it was listening to your favorite piece of music. Just being one with the experience, it was...um... Many of theologians talk about as

the religious experience, as spiritual experience where you just walked through the yard and suddenly felt one—it was a John Harvard—maybe not. But experience just one with everything. This is the experience they talk about in Zen, being connected to the present, feeling so good so complete like you don't need anything else. Everything

is right here. Now I know I experience with my family at times. You know last night having dinner with my family and friends. You know we were sitting around. I just felt this is it, you know, what else do I need. Just being so complete, so in the moment. A peak experience. Now these peak experiences usually don't last for very long. They come and they go. It's a peak. However, they can and often do have repercussions.

Now, maybe you can see now where I'm going with this. So do I. What I thought about when I thought about peak experiences was maybe...just maybe this is the positive equivalent to the trauma. Maybe it's a shock treatment of ecstasy that can have effect beyond just the experience itself, just like PTSD has effect beyond the experience itself.

There're people today who are living and reliving 9/11, still affecting them, still affecting their brain, creating new channels, new pathways that didn't exist before 9/11/01. So is peak experience shock treatment of ecstasy. If peak experience is the positive equivalent of a trauma, then the equivalent of a post-traumatic stress disorder is what I called post peak experience order. I know, cheesy, but I think there is

something behind it. Some research on it. Some, very...um...very little. But I think it actually works. So one of the research studies. She studied...um...women after child birth. And what she found was that sometimes—not always, in fact not most times, but often—these women experience peak experience. And it changed their lives. As a result of it, they became more confident, more generous and benevolent, and happier,

just as a result of a single experience, a shock treatment of ecstasy, something which was...which happened to them, which meant so much to them. Now they did this research in the early 50s or

late, no, early 50s.

Today it may also happen more often with men because men today are more likely to be present when the child is born. You know, I burst out crying. It was a very powerful experience when it happened, certainly peak experience for me. Here's what

Maslow says about peak experiences. And again not talking specifically about post peak experience order, but alluding to it. —They can do the same there as psychotherapy, if one keeps his goals right, and if one knows just what he is about,

and if one is conscious of what he is going toward. We can certainly talk, on the one hand, of the breaking up of symptoms, like the breaking up of clichés, of anxieties, or the like; or on the other hand, we can talk about the development of spontaneity, and of courage, and of Olympian or Godlike humor and suchness, sensory awareness,

body awareness and the like. || So what he's saying here is that these effects can have

consequences beyond just the peak experience if we do certain things such as follow up on it. William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* talks about such moments that change lives and how they change lives. Peak experience can quite literally lead to a new brain order. And again the jury still out on the research. But there are more and more suggestions. And we'll talk about it next time as well that show that there is something there, that it can be the positive equivalent of a trauma if we know what we do, to do with it.

And here's the important issue. The question is—first do we experience peak experiences and experience more of them? And second, after we experience peak experience, how can we make it more likely that we enjoy PPEO? Because just like not everyone after a trauma experience PTSD—in fact the majority don't—Just in the same way, most people don't experience PPEO after a peak experience. How do you increase the likelihood...first of increasing peak experience and second of increasing the likelihood of post peak experience order? So to enhance peak experience, just very briefly because essentially the course is about that. So I'm gonna just throw out a few

ideas that we've talked about and some that we'll talk about.

First, permission to be human, acceptance, accepting emotions. Why? Because if we don't accept painful emotions, if we don't give ourselves permission to be human,

we're blocking our emotional pathways. And positive emotions and painful emotions often flow through the same emotional pathways. And when we're limiting one, we're very often limiting the other. So if we open up the pathways, give ourselves the permission to be human and give ourselves the permission to cry when we're sad or ecstatic. That very often opens up, makes it more likely that we experience positive emotions as well, paradoxical, but this is the paradox of

the permission to be human. When we give ourselves permission to experience painful emotions, we're more likely to experience the positive emotions. Mindfulness, being present. Lot of time when we are listening to music, for example, really listening to music, not just having it as background while text messaging, doing homework and talking to our friends. But when we really listen to music that we love, very often we have a peak experience being present. According to Maslow's research, these are two of the most likely, most likely areas where we can experience the peak experience. And by the way this I believe is...is innate. You know even I see with...with Sherio, my one year old

daughter. You know when there is music, when we dance, she laughs. This is not something we taught her. We were born with, with this inclination for music and dance. We need to take time for that. Having a meaningful goal. When we're on purpose, when we're doing things that we love to do, when what we are, we are doing is meaningful and significant to us, we're much more likely to experience peak experiences. Finally one of the greatest barriers in our culture—time. It's very difficult

to experience peak experiences when we're on the rush, when we're stressed and anxious. These are peak experience killers. Whether it's when making love, whether it's when listening to music, whether it's with...when spending time with friends or all

of the above together.

How do we enhance the likelihood of PPEO once we have experienced peak experience? First thing—replaying an image. Remember the mind doesn't know the difference within the imaginary and the real. It plays it over and over again. And when

we play it over and over again, the neural pathway is reinforced. The sledge hammer begins the neural pathway. And then we reinforce it through replaying through imagination. Writing about it. This is gonna be a response paper next week. Writing about a peak experience. When we journal about it, describing it, not analyzing it. Remember the difference with Lyubomirsky. Positive emotions, positive experiences is not as helpful to analyze. So just to describe it, once again reinforce the neural pathways. We relive it. We replay it. Once again taking time, taking time. And finally taking action which is how we can reinforce the initial experience of the...um...the

peak experience, reinforce the neural pathways. So I had it inside, an Ah-ha moment as a result of this peak experience. Now I'm gonna do something about it and act, which leads me to the second point, which is B—behavior.

I've been teaching and participating in workshops and seminars and classes on self improvement psychology, positive psychology and clinical psychology for almost 20 years since I was...since I was...well before I was 20. And what I noticed in other people's workshops, or in my workshops in seminars in classes is the following. Most

people, if the workshop or the class is good, exit the classroom, or the weekend or the semester. If they were here before, they usually experience a relative high after. But there're two groups of people. Both groups experience a relative high. The first group—which unfortunately are the majority—after that high go back to their base level of happiness, something we're familiar with. The second group, not majority, but not a small minority experience that high after. That high doesn't last forever. However, they go back, but when they go back, their base level of wellbeing is higher than it was before. And they continue to have their vicissitudes, but this time along a

higher base level of happiness than before. Now needless to say, I want to understand why people experience this, some people and other people experience this, because I want people who take my class to enjoy lasting change as opposed to temporary. Nice, feels good, not enough. It doesn't justify the effort that they put into the workshop.

And it doesn't justify the effort that I put into my work. So I want to understand the difference between the two. And here is the single most important difference that I identified between these two groups. Group 2, the distinguishing characteristic was that after the workshop or class or seminar, not at the end of the semester if it was a semester long class, after each class or after many of the classes introducing immediate behavioral change. I'll reevaluate my life and see how I do. Immediately introducing real behavioral change, doing exercises that we talked about in class, taking risks that they haven't before but introducing change immediately, not waiting. And those introduce change immediately don't have a high or peak experience constantly. But their base level of happiness goes up as opposed to going down returning to where it was before when there was no behavioral change. And now I start every workshop and seminar when I have a few days of workshop or seminar introducing this model of change.

What do we know from a lot of research in psychology is that there is a relationship between attitudes and behaviors. And we talked about it, we illuded into it already in the past. So we all have attitudes whether it's attitudes about psychology, whether it's attitudes about another person, whether it's attitude about myself. And these attitudes affect our behavior. So for example, if I have a positive attitude towards psychology or positive psychology, I'm more likely to take 1504 than if my attitude towards psychology and positive psychology is negative. Or if I have a good attitude toward a certain belief about a certain person, I'm much more likely to want befriend this person if I like him than if I don't. So attitudes affect behavior. That's very clear, easy to understand. But what psychologists have found, the likes of Alice Eagly, Daryl Bem and others. What they have found is that behavior also affects attitude. It works both ways.

So if I behave in a certain way, it is likely to change my attitude in accordance with

my behavior. And remember we talked about it. Why? Because we have an attitude and our behavior is the outside world. The mind doesn't like when there is incongruence between the inside and outside. So if we behave in a certain way, the attitude is gonna be pulled down to reflect

that behavior. If we behave in this way, the attitude...the mind doesn't like incongruence, it's going to create equality between the

two, congruency consistency between the two. And the way it'll do that is either by changing our behavior—and here is the key—or more often by changing our attitude. Now all of us here, whether you are 18 or whether you are 80, we all have habits. And

again, we first make our habits and then our habits make us. Habits are behavioral patterns, thinking patterns. Behaviors are more powerful. Action is more powerful than words. If we have a certain behavior that we had before the class, what the class does is changing your attitude about a certain thing. But if it doesn't match with your behavior, after the class the mind looks for consistency. The attitude is gonna be pulled down back to where it was before unless your behavior changes to match your change of behavior. All the class can do, whether it's 1504 or Justice or Psych 1. All the classes, all workshops and seminars, all they can do is to introduce attitudinal change. In this class, attitudinal change is one, for example, self-esteem. What is self-esteem—the attitude that I have toward myself. High self-esteem positive; low

self-esteem negative.

What is the benefit finder versus the fault finder is the attitude toward the world. Do I see this positive as a resource for wellbeing? Or do I focus on the negative as a fault finder. Perfectionism—it's an attitude toward failure. But all this class can do, all I can do, all your TFs can do is to introduce or to encourage attitudinal changes, to

convince you through research that to learn to focus on the positive. However, if you don't follow up with behavior and that means doing the gratitude study...um...the gratitude exercise—that means writing the letter you are responsible for this week but doing it regularly. Unless behavior is gonna follow, the attitude will go back and

reflect your attitude and your behavior from before the class or before the intervention. There has to be behavioral change.

Let me show you some studies showing the impact of the behavioral change. This was done in American prisoners of war during the Korean War. And what Edgar Schein who's just across street here at MIT showed was that the captors of the Americans got them to change their minds about Communism, about the Chinese. Captors, how gradually by simply asking them write about the good things within Communism. We know we don't like Communism. We wouldn't be fighting if we did. But write about the positives of it. Write it to your prison-mates. Write letters home, telling them how you being treated and making sure of course they only focus on the good. So they didn't ask them to lie necessarily though often they did. But they asked them to focus on the positive. Over time, the attitude actually changed. And they became actually more open and more positive toward their captors. Because their behavior, writing letters, talking to their friends about it, they have to give lectures on it, and their attitude over time actually changed. And they became more positive.

Cognitive distance, those of you who have taken Psych 1 or others heard about it. Cognitive distance is when there is incongruence between two thoughts when two beliefs are conflicting. We don't like it. We want there to be a match. Or when there is a conflict between behavior and a belief. And what cognitive distance says is that this is... has to be resolved. And the way we resolve it is usually by getting our attitudes, our thoughts, our beliefs to match our behavior. Again behavior is more powerful than words. Self perception theory—we talked about a lot. I'm not gonna elaborate on it

any more. We see ourselves. And we derive certain conclusions about ourselves. Facial feedback hypothesis. If you put on a frown now or a nice gentle smile, your body chemistries are actually going to change to reflect whatever your face is showing. So this is a quote by...where is it...by Thich Nhat Hanh. Kind of difficult to

pronounce his name—a Buddhist monk. "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."

So we actually influence our body. We actually influence our mood through our face. That's why actors very often can get into whatever character they're playing simply by acting. Because there's the facial feedback to the rest of your body. You actually release chemicals according with the face that you are making. William James. —Whistling to keep up courage is no mere figure of speech. On the other hand,

sit all day in a moping posture, sigh, and reply to everything with a dismal voice, and your melancholy lingers... Smooth the brow, brighten the eyes, contract the dorsal rather than the ventral aspect of the frame, and speak in a major key, pass the genial compliment, and your heart must be frigid indeed. || What essentially William James is talking about is something beyond the facial feedback hypothesis. It's something where there is not much research just a little research on, which is the body feedback hypothesis. If you sit down all day like this versus upright in proud, it will affect your mood. It will affect how you feel about yourself in a few ways. First of all, the

message you communicate to yourself—self perception theory—but also in terms of how other people perceive you. If you shake hands like this limply versus shake hands firmly, you are communicating message to the person with whom you are shaking your hands. And that message comes back right at you both in terms of how they perceive you and that impacts you but also in terms of how you perceive yourself.

You know one of the ex-students from 1504. She played...er...she was on the

hockey team, just graduated last year. So I met her over the summer. And she came over and she shook my hand. And I was in tears. It hurt so much. And I thought she must have listened in class. So don't exaggerate, just firm, nice. I mean really I think she broke some of the bones in my hand. But it matters. It communicates a message. You know I'm not gonna mess with her ever. I'm scared of her right now. It

communicates a message of strength and confidence. If we walk around proud, we're communicating a certain message. If we walk around stooped, we're also communicating a message to the environment that then reflects on us, but also to ourselves and that also reflects on us too.

And finally, I must share a study with you. This is by Hammerly. This is a study done... you know what, actually I'm gonna leave that to next time because I wanna get to something important. So I'm gonna start next time with this, with this study. Because it's said it's a long study. But it's a very important study. So I will, I will talk about it next time first thing in class. I want to get to something before we end, something that will change our relationship. Fake it till you make it. David Myers has done a lot of important work in this area of positive psychology. What he showed was it very often even if we act happy, even if we act with high self-esteem, even if I act joyful as William James said, that affects our mood. The question now becomes what about permission to be human. Well, first of all, there are times when we don't want to fake it till we make it, we wanna cry, we wanna be miserable and we wanna act that way. However, we need to find when is it the time to get out and to go to that party even if it's the last thing in the world that I wanna do. And the difference here is about active acceptance. I can still accept up my emotions. I can still accept my pain and experience it and still choose to act in accordance with how I deal more, most appropriate or most helpful. So I can accept the fact you know I was just dumped say by my girlfriend, I can accept the fact that I feel terrible about it and awful but then three days later go out to Oaks and party, go wild. So faking it again because of the facial feedback hypothesis, because of the body feedback hypothesis, because of self-perception theory. The behavior will affect my attitude. And after a crazy night out in Oaks, I will actually feel better and healthy...well...maybe not, but better.

Here's a quick video of Marva Collins, talking the...talking about some of her

experiences. —I think that maybe what I am is my parents and their consistency I mean

I wanted to be as successful as my parents, my grandparents. In those days, it was quiet rare to be black and to be successful. So I think the determination of my parents and grandparents, they are...we would get chest high. As I said I was 14 years older than my one sister. But if we walked in church and didn't hold our heads up, my mom would say...she would scream down the street, People...I've often heard them comment to her: —I can always tell you child are on the playground. || Get your head up;

walk up straight when you watch Marva Collins. That's how she walks. That's how she carries herself. And that communicates a message to her students, to other people, to herself. I'm gonna jump to this point. So very often, behavioral change is gradual. So what is the acute change? The acute change is about coping. It's about putting ourselves on the line. And when we cope, it's to do something we don't feel comfortable doing. In other words, it's about exiting our comfort zone and

entering our stretch zone.

Now what I wanna do now is share with you two stories from, from my past, two stories that initially you will see unconnected but as you will understand soon are very much connected. One a difficult story ,the other a difficult story. My first memory, you know most people can...most people have a first memory—the first time, the first

thing that you remember. My first memory is from September 1973. I was almost 3 years old. And it was Yom Kippur—the holiest day of the year. And I remember being at home and suddenly the phone ring. Now the phone my parents orthodox.I was raised orthodox. The phone never rings on Shabbat, on a Saturday, let alone Yom Kippur. But the phone rings. Both of my parents...I remember they jump up and run to the phone. My dad picks it up. And I'm standing between my parents. He looks at my mom and say something by whispering. Couldn't hear what it was, but my mom's face changes. And there's terror, fear in her eyes. And I begin to tear. And my dad picks me up and says: —I'm going for a few days, but I'll be back. || Now I know what

happens. So what happened was that my parents got a call from my uncle who at that time was doing his reserves in the military. He's in...he is in intelligence and war had just broke out. Young people are at the holiest day of the year in Israel. The Israel military is most of the people are not the boarders...are not protecting. It is a complete surprise, 5 Arab armies launch a war against Israel. My dad puts me down, goes to his room from the top of the...I still see him taking out his army uniform putting it on, taking his M16 sub machine gun putting it on, putting on his shoes, tying them. And

my mom all the while is with him, making him things. They are talking once in a while smiling at me. But I sense a tension there. I don't know why. We then walk down to my dad's car. He had a turning—old turquoise Ford Cortina. He takes shoe polish and paints the lights of the...of the car. Why? Again later I know because at

night when you drive with your lights on, you don't want the lights to be too bright in case of an air raid. So he paints the lights. And I watch him do all that. And then he picks me up and hugs me. He gets into his car, and I begin to sob uncontrollably. One of our neighbours whose name is Sharlon, he is too old to go into the army. So he is standing there. We all look at my dad going off in the car. He picks me up and I'm crying. And he looks at me and says: —like your dad when you grow up? ||

And I didn't cry for almost 20 years after that. Then I came to Harvard. And I started to study psychology. You know where I'm going right? I started to study psychology...and studying psychology. I realized one of the things that I wanted to work on...one of the most important things that I wanted to work on was getting in touch with my feminine side, the anima the animus. I wanted to be more in touch with of my feminine side because I knew that it wasn't healthy to

repress emotions. I was

repressing painful emotions. The exact same thing happens with positive emotions. Same emotional channels. But I grew up in a culture that's very macho. Men don't cry. Nor do soldiers, or tough. We can handle anything. And that's the culture that I grew up. And again this was my first memory. I heard the same thing over and over and

over again, the same message. It's not cool. It's not manly to show emotions. It reminds me up after losing one of the most important squash tournaments for me, losing the national championships after I'd won it the year before. Surprise. Wasn't supposed to lose it; was supposed to win. I go to my house with my girlfriend after. And we're just hanging out. And suddenly she begins to cry because she understood how important it was for me. And this is how I basically experience my childhood, teenage, being tough, being macho. And then I came here and understood I need to let go. I need to be more in touch with the feminine side. So this is story number one.

Let me move on to story number two. One of the students that I had here—some of you may know her, class of 04—was Lindsay Hyde. Lindsay Hyde studied with me. We had one on one tutorial as well. We worked a lot together—a wonderful organization part of PBHA. She found it, now a national organization. I was also one of the funding board members of that organization. Wonderful site swsg.org for those of you interested. I was invited by Lindsay to give a talk for other women from other colleges around Boston. And I gave a talk. And here's Lindsay. She was with one of

the students—3rd grade student, who she mentors and other Harvard students mentor and do wonderful work. And I believe in this organization. I support it from the...from the get-go almost and I gave a talk. And the talk was about teaching the importance of role modeling, was about integrity. I talked to them about Marva Collins and about the important work that they were doing. And at the end of the talk which went well, I think for myself for the participants, I got a present, a gift, a token of appreciation. And the present was a shirt. It wasn't any shirt. It was a pink shirt—the color I don't normally wear. Certainly I never wore it in Israel. Not only it

was a pink shirt, it was, since it was the Strong Women Strong Girl shirt. It was also a very small shirt, more suited for the 3rd graders than for older ones. But still they said:

—we wanted you to have it as a token of our appreciation. || And then I made a mistake.

And I said jokingly of course. I was teaching 1504 at the time. And here it is the shirt

that I got. And then there was another student of mine from 1504, Tory Martin, who was...who run the organization at that time took over from Lindsay at Harvard. And I laughed and then almost cried. Because...—I mean I was joking, || She said, —look, you just talk to us about the importance of integrity. || which I did, I mean, look at here, integrity. So what am I gonna go back on my word? That's one of my core values, integrity. And then my whole childhood flashed before my eyes. And I thought about something that Churchill said so I looked for the

opportunity. And here it was an opportunity handed to me in a pink shirt, to be more in touch with my feminine side.

So ladies and gentlemen, now I know...I know you're gonna find this hard to believe. But believe me when I say that this for me was going out of my comfort zone. In fact maybe it was going out from my stretch zone a little bit, but into my panic zone. I was telling the TFs before class that when I prepared for this class. You know I have...I have all my notes you know. And here I write. Every time I went over it, when I initially wrote it on my notes, it was like a...adrenalin rush in my stomach, going out of my comfort zone. Now I'm also out of my comfort zone which is why I

have to have it at the end of the class as opposed to the beginning of class. But the key is to attain optimum levels of discomfort. I may have a little overshock...a little bit. But the key is optimum levels of discomfort. And why? There is no other way to change. I can think about it all day long and say I want to be in touch with my feminine side or I want to be more courageous, I want to get out. I can think about it all day long. Nothing will happen. Nothing will happen unless we bring about real actual behavioral change, real actual behavioral action. And when we do that, then the sky is the limit.

Thank you! I will see you on Thursday.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 11

Hi! Good morning! So today's lecture is about change. And things are going to change today. Our relationship is going to change today. So stay tuned.

Last time, last time we ended by talking about the different kinds of change. The first approach—the gradual approach, like water wearing down stone, chipping away gradually slowly taking our time. The second approach—the acute change, the sledge hammer breaking stone creating a new pathway, a new channel. The important thing

to keep in mind with both forms of changes, with all forms of changes, lasting change that is—which is what we are about—not just the spike and the return to base level. The thing to keep in mind about change is that neither is quick-fix. Even when we pick up that sledge hammer, even when we pick it up, we need to do a lot of work before the preparation. So for example, gradual change, slow change would be doing the gratitude exercise every day, slowly becoming more and more of a benefit finder, gradually looking more at the positive, creating a new neural pathway neuron by neuron.

Remember neuroplasticity and neurogenesis—two very important concepts. Because just by knowing by understanding that our brain changes in and of itself makes us more

likely to change. And this is work done by Carol Dweck, whom I'll discuss in future courses when we discuss perfectionism. And then the sledge hammer example is like the Eureka experience—the great insight that doesn't come in a vacuum. It comes after a lot of hard work after a lot of preparation. You know the

99% of perspiration that leads to that inspiration. So no quick-fix. And the belief in quick-fix, the expectation of the quick-fix—that is one of the reasons why levels of the depression are so high today. Because people are frustrated. They are disappointed.

They think there's something wrong with them when they don't succeed in the quick-fix. But they have just...I just write in the book that it's possible if I do these

five things, I'd be happy for the rest of my life. And I do these five things, and I'm not happier. And I begin to question myself. No quick-fix. It takes time. No five easy steps to happiness.

Before we go to the change process, there are a few things we need to understand. The first thing to understand is this—do I, do you really want to change? And it's not a trivial question. It is not a rhetorical question because very often on the conscious level we may be saying yes, but on the subconscious level something is stopping us.

Let me show you an example. So this is the study done by Langer and...and Thompson back in the 80s. And here is what they did. They brought students in or participants in. And they asked them whether they wanted to get rid of certain characteristics, like rigidity or being gullible or grimness. And they asked them whether they wanted to get rid of these characteristics and whether they succeeded in becoming better in this area. Were you able to introduce change, so were you able to actually become less rigid, if this was important for you to change, or less gullible, or less grim? So this is the first two questions that they asked. Did you want to improve

it? Did you wanna change this? And then after, they answered these questions. There was the second part of the study where they asked them to evaluate the positive...the following positive characteristics. Consistency, is it important to you? Is it important to you to be trustworthy? And how important it is for you to be and to be perceived as a serious person? And here is the interesting finding of this research. Those individuals who rated the positive traits—the ones in yellow who rated them high—as personally important to them were less likely to change the negatives. Do you understand implications of the study? Let's say I do wanna get rid of rigidity. I don't

like being rigid. However, at the same time, consistency is a very important value to me. I'm less likely to change my rigidity because they are associated in my mind. And yeah, I don't want to be rigid. But at the same time subconscious is talking here—I

them together. Not wanting to get rid of one because I don't want the baby out with the bath water. And to me they are linked. The same with gullibility and trustworthiness. We can say that the other side of gullibility someone who's trustworthy. Now going to the extreme. I become gullible. However, I don't get rid of my gullibility because I don't want to also get rid of my trustworthiness. Same with grim. I may be grim but that's also subconsciously a sign of my seriousness.

You know for years, literally years, when I've been thinking and writing and analyzing the notion of perfectionism, I couldn't understand why it didn't get better, for very long time. Because I knew perfectionism was hurting me. I read the research. I look through personal experiences. I knew it was hurting me in terms of my well-being for sure, but also in the long term in terms of my success. And yet I couldn't get rid of perfectionism until I read the study. And I asked myself, What's tied in my mind? What goes hand in hand is drive and ambition. And if I had to define myself—this is one of the first things—and because I didn't want to lose these

characteristics, my subconscious didn't let me, stopped me from getting rid of the perfectionism, perfectionism which I define as a debilitating fear of failure. We'll have a whole week on perfectionism. So we'll get more in depth if you'll understand what it means. And it was only once I understood that for me these two things go hand in hand, I was able to unpack them to distinguish them. I said I want to keep one not the other. Or for example, worry and anxiety. Look I've mentioned these many times before, next time I'll talk to you about the process that I underwent to overcome anxiety.

Part of me since the time I can't remember myself being anxious whether it's before matches in squash, whether it's before exams, whether it's before speaking up in section when I was an undergrad. And I wanted to stop that. I didn't want that. However, I didn't let go of worry and anxiety because I also sort with responsibility.

Well if I'm anxious, it can mean I'm responsible. So I prepare for class much more as opposed to just let go and become a slacker. So I associated a positive trait which is responsibility. And remember Brandon? No one is coming very important trait—responsibility. But that prevented me from letting go—subconscious level, not

conscious of the worry and anxiety that I often experienced.

Guilt, again there is good guilt, there is bad guilt. You know it is. Well, I don't want to get rid of guilt because what that means I'm not being empathic and sensitive toward other people. Very often we connect the two. They go hand in hand. Another couple is the notion of simplifying. This is something very personal to me. I wanted to do less because I knew that taking on too many activities was actually hurting me...was hurting my productivity, creativity, well-being. I couldn't simplify. Why?

Because I associate it in my mind with losing my edge. So I didn't let go. Or fault-finding—we talked about this a week ago. Why do people not let go

of fault-finding? Why do they remain pessimistic? Because they connect it with the sense of realism. I don't wanna stop being realistic. I don't wanna be one of those detached Pollyannas. And therefore I don't let go of my fault-finding.

Happiness. One of the most significant barrier to people's happiness is that they associate happiness with slacking off, because the dominant paradigm. If I'm happy now, I ignore experiencing pain. It means I'm letting go. It means I'm not gonna be successful. It means I'm gonna lose my edge. It means I'm gonna lose my drive and ambition. So our subconscious prefers to keep...keep us unhappy, so that we don't lose the other things that we value highly, things such as ambition, things such as

having an edge, things such as our hard work. Now of course, when we look at them we know that they don't necessarily have to go hand in hand. On the contrary, for example, happiness, we know from the broaden and build theory—the positive emotions are actually associated with higher levels of success—whereas I'll talk about

after spring break, when we talk about perfectionism. We know from research, you'll be able to connect it also in the person. Many of you will be able to connect it in the personal level. We know that letting go of this fear of failure and coping, putting

ourselves on the line more, learning from failures looking at it as a...as a stepping

stone that contributes to our success in the long term. It doesn't need to take away from our drive and ambition on the contrary. And the key if we wanna overcome this fear of failure or the worry/anxiety, or the guilt, or the slack of happiness, or getting a better understanding of these characteristics.

For example, understanding that I want to let go of my fear of failure, the debilitating fear of failure, not just fear of failure, because every one is afraid of failure to some extent, but to let go of the debilitating fear of failure and yet maintain my drive or ambition. So more in nuance understanding that you need to go hand in hand. Or, I can't, you know, I never used to be able to say no to people. You know, such a short word, such an easy word, so difficult at times to say. Why? Because I see myself and now I want other people to see me as empathic as sensitive as under...as a

nice guy. And then I unpack the two. And it really doesn't have to hand in hand. I can say no to people very sensitively because very often when I say yes to others, I'm saying no to myself, and in the long term, very often to the relationship. So now I had a better more nuance understanding of when I can say no and when I don't want to say no while maintaining my sensitivity and my empathy without experiencing the same levels of guilt that I experienced before whenever I said no. And the same you can do for every one of these, of these characteristics. So think about what if you wanted to change for a very long time and weren't successful in. Was it perfectionism? Was it, you know, this very serious grimness? And you wanted to be more playful? Well maybe you didn't want to get rid of it because you were afraid of losing your seriousness. And you don't need to. The baby can stay, the bath water can go if we have a more nuance understanding of what it is we want

to change.

In section next week, you are going to do an exercise with your teaching fellows called sentence completion. In that exercise, this is exactly what you are going to do, you're going to identify. It's...it's an exercise devised by Nathaniel Branden. You're

going to do an exercise that will help you identify what you wanna get rid of and what you wanna keep. Very often, that...just that switch that you make in your mind, subconscious as well as conscious mind can open the flood waters, the gates to a new channel, new pathway in our brain, real lasting change.

We're gonna discuss three distinct, the interconnected pathways to change—the ABCs of psychology which we have mentioned before. The ABCs—the A is the affect, the emotion. The B is the behavior, the action. And C is the cognition, the thought. And what we gonna do is we're going to talk about each one of the three. And for each one we're going to talk about the gradual change approach and the acute change approach. So in a sense we're building a three by two. Affect, behavior, cognition times gradual and the acute. And we're going to talk about six different approaches to change. These six approaches to change are interconnected. It's important to connect

them. And ideally we want all three. Why? Quote it up, we used it a few times and we'll use it again, John Dryden, British poet—In order to change a habit, in order to bring about lasting change, we need to have as much of a solid approach as much...um...force in the intervention. It's not just enough to focus on the emotions. It's not just enough to focus on action. It's not enough just to focus on our thinking. We want to focus on the three—the A, the B, and the C. It's...Think about it. It's like a habit can be looked as a flood. There's flood in our mind of certain neurons firing in certain neuron pathway. And what we want to do is to overcome this flood. And to

overcome this flood we need as much force as we can, therefore we want to use as many approaches as we can.

Before we jump into the A, one more thing—what do we want to change? What can

we change? And what can we not change? So according to researchers led by the lights of as we're to explain an individual's happiness, we need to look at the three factors. The first factor is the genetic set range, not genetic set point, it's a range. We're all born with certain predisposition toward happiness and well-being. Some people are born more with, you know, the smiley face with the smiley spoon in their mouth; others less so. And we're all somewhere on this, you know bell curve, some people luckier than others. As I mentioned couple of times before, I wasn't born that

lucky. I was born more on the anxious side of this curve not with the...with the happy

spoon in my mouth, which by the way I think helps me teach this class, because I do these things, I apply these things, I make a difference in my life. you know, been there, done that, doing it. I can

speak from personal experiences as you know. Now some people may look at it and say. Well, my answer to that is...it's not terri...it's not good.

It's not bad. It is the law of gravity. It's not good it's not bad. It is and nature to be commanded must be obeyed. We need to look at our nature, understand it and then make the best of it.

About 50 percent of our levels of well-being of the variance in explaining happiness can't be accounted for by genes, which explains some of the results, or for example, the twin studies. Why there were such similarities among the twins even if they were, or between the twins, even if they were real depart. Because genes matter. Not good, not bad. It is. They matter 50 percent, not 100 percent—thank God—but 50 percent of the variance. The important thing to keep in mind is that we have a lot of control what we do with these genes, and I'm just throwing out numbers. I don't know what it is exactly. But successful basketball players is determined 50 percent by genes

in terms of how much fast twitch versus slow twitch they have in their muscles, or how high they can jump, how coordinated they are, how tall they are. All these things matter. However, if Michael Jordan hadn't worked on his basketball, I would be a better player than he is. If he didn't work on his basketball at all, and I did and do. In

other words, also with genes, people who don't work on their happiness even if they have the best of genes will not do as well as people with less happy genes who work on it. So work matters a great deal.

The second thing that matters which makes up the hundred percent of variance of happiness is external circumstances. Of course, external circumstances make a lot of difference, whether we're living in a free country versus oppression. That makes a lot of difference. However, in general, external circumstances beyond the extremes, beyond being homeless on the street make very little difference, in fact, about 10% of the total variance. So genetic genes 50%, external circumstances such as place of residence, such as income, such as weather—and again not for people, for example,

who have seasonal affective disorder. Then of course it matters whether we get sun or not. I'm talking about...um...most people, not people with SAD. So out of these extremes, external circumstances make, matter about 10%, not much.

The third thing, the rest of the 40% is accounted for by intentional activities. What that means is what we do, how we act, what we think about, how we interpret the world, what we focus on. In essence, what 1504 is about. What we have discussed since the first class, what we're gonna discuss even more in the second half of the semester. These intentional activities, our focus, these are essentially our ABCs. This is what real meaningful change comes. And this is where we are gonna focus. It would be nice if we could do something with our genes. It would be nice. Cannot.

It would be nice if we had more control of our external circumstances. But even if we did and many people do, many people sitting in this room or watching at home, do have more control doesn't make that much of the difference. What makes the most difference that we have control over are the internal activities, our interpretation of the world and our action. So let's jump into it.

logical connection—linguistic connection between emotion, motivation, motion. Emotion to move away. Without emotion we wouldn't move. You read about it in the book. Or you will read about it in the book about Elliott, who just lost his emotional faculty and with it lost all motivation to act or do anything even though his cognition was in place. We need emotion in order to move. So I wanna talk about again, two

aspects within emotion. The first—gradual change. The Second—more acute change.

The gradual change is a mindful meditation. Mindful meditation is arguably the most powerful intervention for bringing about calm and equanimity. A lot of research on it, we're gonna spend a whole week talking about it. Today what I wanna do is just to introduce it, the basic, the foundation of the spiral of mindfulness.

Jon Kabatt-Zin who in many ways is responsible for bringing serious research into this realm. He along with people like Tara Bennett-Goleman, people like Herbert Benson from the medical school here, brought serious research to this what was considered a mystical field. —Cultivating mindfulness can lead to the discovery of deep realms of relaxation, calmness and insight within yourself. The path to it in any

moment lies no farther than your own body This is the amazing thing about mindfulness. || When we talk about research, quite literally mind-boggling, I mean they change the way our mind works, transform our brain just by focusing on the breath, by focusing on parts of our body, by being present. "All of us have the capacity to be mindful. All it involves is cultivating our ability to pay attention in the present moment." Let's experience it just for a minute or two. So here is what I'd like you to do once again if you feel comfortable with it. So sit back on your...on your chair with your back against...against the back rest. Make yourself as comfortable as

you can. Plant both feet on the ground comfortably. And if you feel comfortable, if you feel comfortable, just close your eyes. And move your attention to your breathing. Take a deep breath in, into your belly. Slow, quiet, gentle exhalation. Deep slow

mind wanders, just return to your breathing. Now in your mind's eye, just scan your body—your forehead, your eyes, your nose, mouth, your neck, your chest, your upper back, lower back, your legs, all the way down to your feet. Just scan your body while

continuing to breathe deeply, slowly and gently. And through your scan, find a part of your body that is a little bit more tense than the others. It could be your jaws. It could be your neck. It could be your shoulders, your stomach. You're feeling a little bit of disease. Could be your legs, your knees, your feet. Identify that one part of the body that is a little bit more tense than the others and focus on it and continue to breath. Take a deep breath into that part of your body. And when you let go and you exhale, also let go of the tension that's there. Just relax it. And take a few deep

breath into that part of your body and relax it and let go. Return your focus to your breathing. Take a deep breath in. Slow gentle quiet long exhale, relaxing with the exhalation. Deep breathing in, deep slow gentle long exhaling. At the end of the next exhalation, gently slowly quietly open your eyes. Once again if the person next to you is asleep, just gently wake them up. If someone is speaking in their sleep, please wake them up.

—Mindfulness means seeing things as they are, without trying to change them. The point is to dissolve our reactions to disturbing emotions, This is what permission to be human is all about. || Along the emotion, experiencing the emotion, and just breathing through it. And very often when we do that—not always, but very often—it dissolves. And with it, with the emotional dissolution of the emotion comes also the psychological dissolution of this painful emotion. Again we'll talk much, much more about this very important intervention after spring break. This is about gradual change. What we'll see when we talk about research is that even if this is gradual change,

within as little as 8 weeks of regular meditation, our brain actually starts to change its form to transform. Our immune system strengthens after as little as 8 weeks of regular daily meditation. It doesn't have to be 5 hours a day. As little as 30 minutes or 20

that you'll take up as a life time, life long intervention.

Here is an example of more acute change when it comes to our emotion. So when I thought about filling in this box in the 3 by 2 model, how do I find the acute emotional change? Immediately my mind went to research in clinical psychology, specifically to

post-traumatic stress disorder. Post-traumatic stress disorder—something that has been studied thousands and thousands of articles; research done in our department too. And when I look at it, I said: Because what

happens when we have a trauma, many people after the trauma are changed forever, for the rest of their lives if they have PTSD. It actually has changed...changes the chemical that flow through our brain. It changes the structure of our brain, creates new neural pathways, kills a lot of old neural pathways as a result of a single experience. It's a sledge hammer. It is very widespread unfortunately. I mentioned it last time. 30 percent of Vietnam vets have PTSD. 30 percent. 80 percent from the first Gulf War have PTSD. As I mention, we don't have the exact data yet from the second Gulf War. But the numbers are likely gonna be higher than that. After 911 or before 911 right there were 20,000 individuals with PTSD south of 110th street New York. Right after 911, 60,000 individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder. Now this has consequences. Again it has consequences on the way our brain functions, very often, not always, but very often for the rest of our lives. So this is an acute change. It comes immediately one trauma, 911 or seeing something terrible in war. And then that often has an effect for the rest of, for the per...for the entire life. It's a shock treatment, a negative shock treatment. Now when look at PTSD, when I thought about it, I asked...I mean this is clinical psychology.

First of all, a lot of research started only 1998, again 10 years ago, the time when positive psychology came in to the scene, research on post-traumatic growth. And what was found was that in fact more people experience growth as a result of a trauma

than post...than PTSD. However, we don't talk about post-traumatic growth. Everyone knows about PTSD. But again this is another example of where the light is not shed on something that is actually working well. And what is working here? Most people are extremely resilient able to withstand trauma. And that is a very empowering understanding to have. We'll become more of a self-fulfilling prophecy, and more people will experience post-traumatic growth if they only knew that it was a possibility that it was common. If they didn't feel guilty about experiencing growth as a result of trauma, how can I grow after what I saw, what I viewed, what I experienced in Vietnam. It's wrong. Again things don't happen for the best, but some people are able to make the best of things that happen. Post-traumatic growth, it happens when people begin to focus on the benefit.

So what is the benefit of this trauma? It didn't happen for the best. But what if I learn from my cancer, for example, well...to be closer to my family, to appreciate the breath, to appreciate the flowers, to enjoy my friends more. Didn't happen for the best. Benefit finding. Or many people are able to find meaning in it through journaling.

We'll talk about journaling next class. Or people who are able to share their experience of the trauma. Remember the difference between holocaust survivors and Vietnam vets? Holocaust survivors shared, talked about it, wrote about it. Vietnam vets ruminated about it.

Going back to the Lyubomirsky study. And when you just ruminate without sharing, without...without taking it out, it becomes stronger and it's more likely to become PTSD. But it doesn't always do that. And it's important to understand the magnetism of post-traumatic growth. So here is the question that I have. This is a positive psychology course. Remember what positive psychology is...is that it focuses on what works. So the question that I asked myself as I was preparing for this course was this—is there a positive equivalent to trauma, something that is so powerful yet

positive that will change the way our brain functions in an instance like a sledge hammer? Is there something like that? Or in other words, what I asked is, can a single positive experience create a positive channel that will lead to a permanent increase in wellbeing, calm and positive memories? In other words, the opposite of PTSD. And again asking you shall receive; a question begins a quest. And as soon as I ask this question, it open up channels that I didn't see before that were literally right in front of my eyes. And this was the work that I've studied for many years of one of my intellectual heroes—Abraham Maslow who talks about the peak experience. Now,

what I'm gonna talk about now is more hypothesis than well grounded research. It's a hypothesis

that I hope some of you will, will research either here as your senior thesis, or in the future, or will encourage people to research these ideas. Everything that I share in this class is based on very rigorous research. This is one area where it's a hypothesis. But bear with me and see what you think of it, of this hypothesis when I finish explaining it. Because there is some, some research on it, not enough you know, for a stand of approval yet. But think about it. Does it make sense?

So let's see what a peak experience is. Maslow's definition of a peak experience: for the happiest moments of life, for experiences of ecstasy, rapture, bliss of the greatest joy. I found that such experiences came from profound aesthetic experiences such as creative ecstasies, moments of mature love, perfect sexual experiences, parental love, experiences of natural childbirth and many others. Everyone or most of people have the experience, peak experiences again, whether it was with your girlfriend boyfriend, whether it was reading a book, whether it was listening to your favorite piece of music. Just being one with the experience, it was...um... Many of theologians talk about as

the religious experience, as spiritual experience where you just walked through the yard and suddenly felt one—it was a John Harvard—maybe not. But experience just one with everything. This is the experience they talk about in Zen, being connected to the present, feeling so good so complete like you don't need anything else. Everything

is right here. Now I know I experience with my family at times. You know last night having dinner with my family and friends. You know we were sitting around. I just felt this is it, you know, what else do I need. Just being so complete, so in the moment. A peak experience. Now these peak experiences usually don't last for very long. They come and they go. It's a peak. However, they can and often do have repercussions.

Now, maybe you can see now where I'm going with this. So do I. What I thought about when I thought about peak experiences was maybe...just maybe this is the positive equivalent to the trauma. Maybe it's a shock treatment of ecstasy that can have effect beyond just the experience itself, just like PTSD has effect beyond the experience itself.

There're people today who are living and reliving 9/11, still affecting them, still affecting their brain, creating new channels, new pathways that didn't exist before 9/11/01. So is peak experience shock treatment of ecstasy. If peak experience is the positive equivalent of a trauma, then the equivalent of a post-traumatic stress disorder is what I called post peak experience order. I know, cheesy, but I think there is

something behind it. Some research on it. Some, very...um...very little. But I think it actually works. So one of the research studies. She studied...um...women after child birth. And what she found was that sometimes—not always, in fact not most times, but often—these women experience peak experience. And it changed their lives. As a result of it, they became more confident, more generous and benevolent, and happier,

just as a result of a single experience, a shock treatment of ecstasy, something which was...which happened to them, which meant so much to them. Now they did this research in the early 50s or late, no, early 50s.

Today it may also happen more often with men because men today are more likely to be present when the child is born. You know, I burst out crying. It was a very powerful experience when it happened, certainly peak experience for me. Here's what

Maslow says about peak experiences. And again not talking specifically about post peak experience order, but alluding to it. —They can do the same there as psychotherapy, if one keeps his goals right, and if one knows just what he is about, and if one is conscious of what he is going toward. We can certainly talk, on the one hand, of the breaking up of symptoms, like the breaking up of clichés, of anxieties, or the like; or on the other hand, we can talk about the development of spontaneity, and of courage, and of Olympian or Godlike humor and suchness, sensory awareness, body awareness and the like. || So what he's saying here is that these effects can have

consequences beyond just the peak experience if we do certain things such as follow up on it. William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* talks about such moments that change lives and how they change lives. Peak experience can quite literally lead to a new brain order. And again the jury still out on the research. But there are more and more suggestions. And we'll talk about it next time as well that show that there is something there, that it can be the positive equivalent of a trauma if we know what we do, to do with it.

And here's the important issue. The question is—first do we experience peak experiences and experience more of them? And second, after we experience peak experience, how can we make it more likely that we enjoy PPEO? Because just like not everyone after a trauma experience PTSD—in fact the majority don't—Just in the same way, most people don't experience PPEO after a peak experience. How do you increase the likelihood...first of increasing peak experience and second of increasing the likelihood of post peak experience order? So to enhance peak experience, just very briefly because essentially the course is about that. So I'm gonna just throw out a few

ideas that we've talked about and some that we'll talk about.

First, permission to be human, acceptance, accepting emotions. Why? Because if we don't accept painful emotions, if we don't give ourselves permission to be human,

we're blocking our emotional pathways. And positive emotions and painful emotions often flow through the same emotional pathways. And when we're limiting one, we're very often limiting the other. So if we open up the pathways, give ourselves the permission to be human and give

ourselves the permission to cry when we're sad or ecstatic. That very often opens up, makes it more likely that we experience positive emotions as well, paradoxical, but this is the paradox of the permission to be human. When we give ourselves permission to experience painful emotions, we're more likely to experience the positive emotions. Mindfulness, being present. Lot of time when we are listening to music, for example, really listening to music, not just having it as background while text messaging, doing homework and talking to our friends. But when we really listen to music that we love, very often we have a peak experience being present. According to Maslow's research, these are two of the most likely, most likely areas where we can experience the peak experience. And by the way this I

believe is...is innate. You know even I see with...with Sherio, my one year old

daughter. You know when there is music, when we dance, she laughs. This is not something we taught her. We were born with, with this inclination for music and dance. We need to take time for that. Having a meaningful goal. When we're on purpose, when we're doing things that we love to do, when what we are, we are doing is meaningful and significant to us, we're much more likely to experience peak

experiences. Finally one of the greatest barriers in our culture—time. It's very difficult

to experience peak experiences when we're on the rush, when we're stressed and anxious. These are peak experience killers. Whether it's when making love, whether it's when listening to music, whether it's with...when spending time with friends or all

of the above together.

How do we enhance the likelihood of PPEO once we have experienced peak experience? First thing—replaying an image. Remember the mind doesn't know the difference within the imaginary and the real. It plays it over and over again. And when

we play it over and over again, the neural pathway is reinforced. The sledge hammer begins the neural pathway. And then we reinforce it through replaying through imagination. Writing about it. This is gonna be a response paper next week. Writing about a peak experience. When we journal about it, describing it, not analyzing it. Remember the difference with Lyubomirsky. Positive emotions, positive experiences is not as helpful to analyze. So just to describe it, once again reinforce the neural pathways. We relive it. We replay it. Once again taking time, taking time. And finally

taking action which is how we can reinforce the initial experience of the...um...the

peak experience, reinforce the neural pathways. So I had it inside, an Ah-ha moment as a result of this peak experience. Now I'm gonna do something about it and act, which leads me to the second point, which is B—behavior.

I've been teaching and participating in workshops and seminars and classes on self improvement psychology, positive psychology and clinical psychology for almost 20 years since I was...since I

was...well before I was 20. And what I noticed in other people's workshops, or in my workshops in seminars in classes is the following. Most people, if the workshop or the class is good, exit the classroom, or the weekend or the semester. If they were here before, they usually experience a relative high after. But there're two groups of people. Both groups experience a relative high. The first group—which unfortunately are the majority—after that high go back to their base level of happiness, something we're familiar with. The second group, not majority, but not a small minority experience that high after. That high doesn't last forever. However, they go back, but when they go back, their base level of wellbeing is higher than it was before. And they continue to have their vicissitudes, but this time along a

higher base level of happiness than before. Now needless to say, I want to understand why people experience this, some people and other people experience this, because I want people who take my class to enjoy lasting change as opposed to temporary. Nice, feels good, not enough. It doesn't justify the effort that they put into the workshop.

And it doesn't justify the effort that I put into my work. So I want to understand the difference between the two. And here is the single most important difference that I identified between these two groups. Group 2, the distinguishing characteristic was that after the workshop or class or seminar, not at the end of the semester if it was a semester long class, after each class or after many of the classes introducing immediate behavioral change. I'll reevaluate my life and see how I do. Immediately introducing real behavioral change, doing exercises that we talked about in class, taking risks that they haven't before but introducing change immediately, not waiting. And those introduce change immediately don't have a high or peak experience constantly. But their base level of happiness goes up as opposed to going down returning to where it was before when there was no behavioral change. And now I start every workshop and seminar when I have a few days of workshop or seminar introducing this model of change.

What do we know from a lot of research in psychology is that there is a relationship between attitudes and behaviors. And we talked about it, we illuded into it already in the past. So we all have attitudes whether it's attitudes about psychology, whether it's attitudes about another person, whether it's attitude about myself. And these attitudes affect our behavior. So for example, if I have a positive attitude towards psychology or positive psychology, I'm more likely to take 1504 than if my attitude towards psychology and positive psychology is negative. Or if I have a good attitude toward a certain belief about a certain person, I'm much more likely to want befriend this person if I like him than if I don't. So attitudes affect behavior. That's very clear, easy to understand. But what psychologists have found, the likes of Alice Eagly, Daryl Bem and others. What they have found is that behavior also affects attitude. It works both ways.

So if I behave in a certain way, it is likely to change my attitude in accordance with

my behavior. And remember we talked about it. Why? Because we have an attitude and our

behavior is the outside world. The mind doesn't like when there is incongruence between the inside and outside. So if we behave in a certain way, the attitude is gonna be pulled down to reflect that behavior. If we behave in this way, the attitude...the mind doesn't like incongruence, it's going to create equality between the

two, congruency consistency between the two. And the way it'll do that is either by changing our behavior—and here is the key—or more often by changing our attitude. Now all of us here, whether you are 18 or whether you are 80, we all have habits. And

again, we first make our habits and then our habits make us. Habits are behavioral patterns, thinking patterns. Behaviors are more powerful. Action is more powerful than words. If we have a certain behavior that we had before the class, what the class does is changing your attitude about a certain thing. But if it doesn't match with your behavior, after the class the mind looks for consistency. The attitude is gonna be pulled down back to where it was before unless your behavior changes to match your change of behavior. All the class can do, whether it's 1504 or Justice or Psych 1. All the classes, all workshops and seminars, all they can do is to introduce attitudinal change. In this class, attitudinal change is one, for example, self-esteem. What is self-esteem—the attitude that I have toward myself. High self-esteem positive; low

self-esteem negative.

What is the benefit finder versus the fault finder is the attitude toward the world. Do I see this positive as a resource for wellbeing? Or do I focus on the negative as a fault finder. Perfectionism—it's an attitude toward failure. But all this class can do, all I can do, all your TFs can do is to introduce or to encourage attitudinal changes, to

convince you through research that to learn to focus on the positive. However, if you don't follow up with behavior and that means doing the gratitude study...um...the gratitude exercise—that means writing the letter you are responsible for this week but doing it regularly. Unless behavior is gonna follow, the attitude will go back and

reflect your attitude and your behavior from before the class or before the intervention. There has to be behavioral change.

Let me show you some studies showing the impact of the behavioral change. This was done in American prisoners of war during the Korean War. And what Edgar Schein who's just across street here at MIT showed was that the captors of the Americans got them to change their minds about Communism, about the Chinese. Captors, how gradually by simply asking them write about the good things within Communism. We know we don't like Communism. We wouldn't be fighting if we did. But write about the positives of it. Write it to your prison-mates. Write letters home, telling them how you being treated and making sure of course they only focus on the good. So they didn't ask them to lie necessarily though often they did. But they asked them to focus on the positive. Over time, the attitude actually changed. And they became actually more open and more positive toward their captors. Because their behavior, writing letters, talking to

their friends about it, they have to give lectures on it, and their attitude over time actually changed. And they became more positive.

Cognitive distance, those of you who have taken Psych 1 or others heard about it. Cognitive distance is when there is incongruence between two thoughts when two beliefs are conflicting. We don't like it. We want there to be a match. Or when there is a conflict between behavior and a belief. And what cognitive distance says is that this is... has to be resolved. And the way we resolve it is usually by getting our attitudes, our thoughts, our beliefs to match our behavior. Again behavior is more powerful than words. Self perception theory—we talked about a lot. I'm not gonna elaborate on it

any more. We see ourselves. And we derive certain conclusions about ourselves. Facial feedback hypothesis. If you put on a frown now or a nice gentle smile, your body chemistries are actually going to change to reflect whatever your face is showing. So this is a quote by...where is it...by Thich Nhat Hanh. Kind of difficult to

pronounce his name—a Buddhist monk. "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."

So we actually influence our body. We actually influence our mood through our face. That's why actors very often can get into whatever character they're playing simply by acting. Because there's the facial feedback to the rest of your body. You actually release chemicals according with the face that you are making. William James. —Whistling to keep up courage is no mere figure of speech. On the other hand,

sit all day in a moping posture, sigh, and reply to everything with a dismal voice, and your melancholy lingers... Smooth the brow, brighten the eyes, contract the dorsal rather than the ventral aspect of the frame, and speak in a major key, pass the genial compliment, and your heart must be frigid indeed. || What essentially William James is talking about is something beyond the facial feedback hypothesis. It's something where there is not much research just a little research on, which is the body feedback hypothesis. If you sit down all day like this versus upright in proud, it will affect your mood. It will affect how you feel about yourself in a few ways. First of all, the

message you communicate to yourself—self perception theory—but also in terms of how other people perceive you. If you shake hands like this limply versus shake hands firmly, you are communicating message to the person with whom you are shaking your hands. And that message comes back right at you both in terms of how they perceive you and that impacts you but also in terms of how you perceive yourself.

You know one of the ex-students from 1504. She played...er...she was on the

hockey team, just graduated last year. So I met her over the summer. And she came over and she shook my hand. And I was in tears. It hurt so much. And I thought she must have listened in class. So don't exaggerate, just firm, nice. I mean really I think she broke some of the bones in my hand.

But it matters. It communicates a message. You know I'm not gonna mess with her ever. I'm scared of her right now. It

communicates a message of strength and confidence. If we walk around proud, we're communicating a certain message. If we walk around stooped, we're also communicating a message to the environment that then reflects on us, but also to ourselves and that also reflects on us too.

And finally, I must share a study with you. This is by Hammerly. This is a study done... you know what, actually I'm gonna leave that to next time because I wanna get to something important. So I'm gonna start next time with this, with this study. Because it's said it's a long study. But it's a very important study. So I will, I will talk about it next time first thing in class. I want to get to something before we end, something that will change our relationship. Fake it till you make it. David Myers has done a lot of important work in this area of positive psychology. What he showed was it very often even if we act happy, even if we act with high self-esteem, even if I act joyful as William James said, that affects our mood. The question now becomes what about permission to be human. Well, first of all, there are times when we don't want to fake it till we make it, we wanna cry, we wanna be miserable and we wanna act that way. However, we need to find when is it the time to get out and to go to that party even if it's the last thing in the world that I wanna do. And the difference here is about active acceptance. I can still accept up my emotions. I can still accept my pain and experience it and still choose to act in accordance with how I deal more, most appropriate or most helpful. So I can accept the fact you know I was just dumped say by my girlfriend, I can accept the fact that I feel terrible about it and awful but then three days later go out to Oaks and party, go wild. So faking it again because of the facial feedback hypothesis, because of the body feedback hypothesis, because of self-perception theory. The behavior will affect my attitude. And after a crazy night out in Oaks, I will actually feel better and healthy...well...maybe not, but better.

Here's a quick video of Marva Collins, talking the...talking about some of her

experiences. —I think that maybe what I am is my parents and their consistency I mean

I wanted to be as successful as my parents, my grandparents. In those days, it was quiet rare to be black and to be successful. So I think the determination of my parents and grandparents, they are...we would get chest high. As I said I was 14 years older than my one sister. But if we walked in church and didn't hold our heads up, my mom would say...she would scream down the street, People...I've often heard them comment to her: —I can always tell you child are on the playground. || Get your head up;

walk up straight when you watch Marva Collins. That's how she walks. That's how she carries herself. And that communicates a message to her students, to other people, to herself. I'm gonna jump to this point. So very often, behavioral change is gradual. So what is the acute change? The

acute change is about coping. It's about putting ourselves on the line. And when we cope, it's to do something we don't feel comfortable doing. In other words, it's about exiting our comfort zone and entering our stretch zone.

Now what I wanna do now is share with you two stories from, from my past, two stories that initially you will see unconnected but as you will understand soon are very much connected. One a difficult story ,the other a difficult story. My first memory, you know most people can...most people have a first memory—the first time, the first

thing that you remember. My first memory is from September 1973. I was almost 3 years old. And it was Yom Kippur—the holiest day of the year. And I remember being at home and suddenly the phone ring. Now the phone my parents orthodox.I was raised orthodox. The phone never rings on Shabbat, on a Saturday, let alone Yom Kippur. But the phone rings. Both of my parents...I remember they jump up and run to the phone. My dad picks it up. And I'm standing between my parents. He looks at my mom and say something by whispering. Couldn't hear what it was, but my mom's face changes. And there's terror, fear in her eyes. And I begin to tear. And my dad picks me up and says: —I'm going for a few days, but I'll be back. || Now I know what

happens. So what happened was that my parents got a call from my uncle who at that time was doing his reserves in the military. He's in...he is in intelligence and war had just broke out. Young people are at the holiest day of the year in Israel. The Israel

military is most of the people are not the boarders...are not protecting. It is a complete surprise, 5 Arab armies launch a war against Israel. My dad puts me down, goes to his room from the top of the...I still see him taking out his army uniform putting it on, taking his M16 sub machine gun putting it on, putting on his shoes, tying them. And

my mom all the while is with him, making him things. They are talking once in a while smiling at me. But I sense a tension there. I don't know why. We then walk down to my dad's car. He had a turning—old turquoise Ford Cortina. He takes shoe polish and paints the lights of the...of the car. Why? Again later I know because at

night when you drive with your lights on, you don't want the lights to be too bright in case of an air raid. So he paints the lights. And I watch him do all that. And then he picks me up and hugs me. He gets into his car, and I begin to sob uncontrollably. One of our neighbours whose name is Sharlon, he is too old to go into the army. So he is standing there. We all look at my dad going off in the car. He picks me up and I'm crying. And he looks at me and says: —like your dad when you grow up? ||

And I didn't cry for almost 20 years after that. Then I came to Harvard. And I started to study psychology. You know where I'm going right? I started to study psychology...and studying

psychology. I realized one of the things that I wanted to work on...one of the most important things that I wanted to work on was getting in touch with my feminine side, the anima the animus. I wanted to be more in touch with of my feminine side because I knew that it wasn't healthy to repress emotions. I was

repressing painful emotions. The exact same thing happens with positive emotions. Same emotional channels. But I grew up in a culture that's very macho. Men don't cry. Nor do soldiers, or tough. We can handle anything. And that's the culture that I grew up. And again this was my first memory. I heard the same thing over and over and

over again, the same message. It's not cool. It's not manly to show emotions. It reminds me up after losing one of the most important squash tournaments for me, losing the national championships after I'd won it the year before. Surprise. Wasn't supposed to lose it; was supposed to win. I go to my house with my girlfriend after. And we're just hanging out. And suddenly she begins to cry because she understood how important it was for me. And this is how I basically experience my childhood, teenage, being tough, being macho. And then I came here and understood I need to let go. I need to be more in touch with the feminine side. So this is story number one.

Let me move on to story number two. One of the students that I had here—some of you may know her, class of 04—was Lindsay Hyde. Lindsay Hyde studied with me. We had one on one tutorial as well. We worked a lot together—a wonderful organization part of PBHA. She found it, now a national organization. I was also one of the funding board members of that organization. Wonderful site swsg.org for those of you interested. I was invited by Lindsay to give a talk for other women from other colleges around Boston. And I gave a talk. And here's Lindsay. She was with one of

the students—3rd grade student, who she mentors and other Harvard students mentor and do wonderful work. And I believe in this organization. I support it from the...from the get-go almost and I gave a talk. And the talk was about teaching the importance of role modeling, was about integrity. I talked to them about Marva Collins and about the important work that they were doing. And at the end of the talk which went well, I think for myself for the participants, I got a present, a gift, a token of appreciation. And the present was a shirt. It wasn't any shirt. It was a pink shirt—the color I don't normally wear. Certainly I never wore it in Israel. Not only it

was a pink shirt, it was, since it was the Strong Women Strong Girl shirt. It was also a very small shirt, more suited for the 3rd graders than for older ones. But still they said:

—we wanted you to have it as a token of our appreciation. || And then I made a mistake.

And I said jokingly of course. I was teaching 1504 at the time. And here it is the shirt

that I got. And then there was another student of mine from 1504, Tory Martin, who was...who run the organization at that time took over from Lindsay at Harvard. And I laughed and then almost cried. Because...—I mean I was joking, || She said, —look, you just talk to us

about the importance of integrity. || which I did, I mean, look at here, integrity. So what am I gonna go back on my word? That's one of my core values, integrity. And then my whole childhood flashed before my eyes. And I thought about something that Churchill said so I looked for the opportunity. And here it was an opportunity handed to me in a pink shirt, to be more in touch with my feminine side.

So ladies and gentlemen, now I know...I know you're gonna find this hard to believe. But believe me when I say that this for me was going out of my comfort zone. In fact maybe it was going out from my stretch zone a little bit, but into my panic zone. I was telling the TFs before class that when I prepared for this class. You know I have...I have all my notes you know. And here I write. Every time I went over it, when I initially wrote it on my notes, it was like a...adrenalin rush in my stomach, going out of my comfort zone. Now I'm also out of my comfort zone which is why I

have to have it at the end of the class as opposed to the beginning of class. But the key is to attain optimum levels of discomfort. I may have a little overshock...a little bit. But the key is optimum levels of discomfort. And why? There is no other way to change. I can think about it all day long and say I want to be in touch with my feminine side or I want to be more courageous, I want to get out. I can think about it all day long. Nothing will happen. Nothing will happen unless we bring about real actual behavioral change, real actual behavioral action. And when we do that, then the sky is the limit.

Thank you! I will see you on Thursday.

Positive Psychology – Lecture 12

Dr.Tal Ben-Shahar: Hi.Good morning. So first of all, are there any junior parents today? Welcome. Welcome. I'm so glad you are here. I'm even gladder you weren't here on Tuesday. So just...just...Just a couple of announcements. Yeah, you know, I was asking myself after Tuesday, "Are they ever going to take me seriously again?" I hope so. Or "will they love me tomorrow?"

So just a couple of announcements. First, there are many emails regarding the response papers, whether the gratitude letters that you write, you also need to submit to your, to your TF, as the response paper. So the answer is yes and no. Alright, next. Yes! You do need to submit it. However, if the letter is too personal or you don't feel comfortable for any reason submitting to your TF as well, just send your TF a note saying "I wrote the letter" and we will take your word for it. And...so you don't have to submit it, though it would be great if you do.

The midterm is coming up in a week and a half. So just a couple of words about the midterm.

What we have decided to do is to just have a multiple choice midterm. There'll be - can't remember how many - 50? Five zero. 50 questions on the multiple choices. And you'll have 75 minutes to do it. So we'll allow for the 10 minutes or 15 minutes to get organized here. It's not going to be a difficult, you know... Try to fool you or to catch you. It's going to be pretty straight forward.

I've told you my philosophy about exams during the first class, those of you who remember. In the past, I didn't used to have an exam because I remember I wasn't happy taking exams as an undergrad. And you know do not do unto others. But then, I realize that there was the value to them. Not a value in terms of differentiation, grades and stuff, all that. The value is that the midterm or final gets you to sit down and synthesize all the material. So if it's a take home, you look for the answers where you

are. You take...you just get part of it. With the midterm or final, you sit down and you read everything from lesson 1 to lesson 26. And then that helps you synthesize and hence internalize the material.

Because remember what I mentioned time and again: this class is built around the spiral theory of knowledge, meaning everything we talked about in lesson 1, in class 1, is related to class 3, is related to class 7, is related to class 24. Everything is interconnected. And it's when you sit down, you know when I talk about the material, I know it's going to come three weeks from now and I know the connection You still don't, but when you sit down and study for the exam, that's when you get to make the

connection, and that's when you really internalize the material at a much higher level. So this is why we have it. I know it's not fun however I think it is pedagogically. It is important to sit down and have a run through, whether it's the midterm and again, for the final. Again, won't be difficult, but do study for it. It would be very

straightforward, fact-based. The midterm, as you can imagine, is not about showing creativity. Our goal is that you go over the material and synthesize it. If you have any questions, please email your TFs and they'll be able to answer. If not, then email me.

OK. So where were we last time? Actually can't remember. I think I repress the whole lesson. But I was told that I skipped a few things so that I could get to the show at the end. And one thing that I skipped and I want to talk about goes back to, after we talked about the body feedback hypothesis. You remember the body feedback hypothesis? How you shake your hand, how you carry yourself. With the facial feedback hypothesis, with your smile, your frown. That communicates certain message to other people, who then reflect back to us and at the same time, we are also communicating to ourselves.

Am I confident? or am I proud? Or am I afraid and scared? And very often we need to, as we talk about "fake it till we make it". Because our body, our behavior sends

messages to our mind, to our emotions and affects them.

There was a wonderful research done by Haemmerlie and second author, Montgomery. Haemmerlie and Montgomery did the following research. They recruited shy heterosexual men. Recruited them for the study. Shy, heterosexual men. And the study was run as follow: these men were told that the study was about taking certain test and they were invited into the equivalent of William James Hall, and they were told "unfortunately we were running behind, so you have to wait. You have to wait until the study actually takes place. In the mean time, you know here is a waiting room and there are other people waiting for the same test. And we'll come and get you. It may take a while. Sorry. We'll pay you for it for the time you have to wait extra." So they ended up waiting in a waiting room. And with them was waiting another person. A female, who unbeknownst to them was actually a confederate, was actually a part of the study.

But they thought she was just like them, waiting, also waiting in line for the study to take place. So they were sitting there for 12 minutes with a woman, whose instruction was to strike up a conversation with this shy heterosexual man, and to express a lot of interest and excitement about what they were saying. So they were listening and they were asking questions. "Wow." "Really?" They were laughing at what they were saying for 12 minutes. And then, that, the woman went into the experiment or so they thought. Another woman comes in. Again, for 12 minutes, she sits down with the shy heterosexual man and seems very interested and laughs at what he has to say, and asks questions. And so on and so...for 12 minutes. And the next woman comes in, as she goes into the experiment. And so on. Six times. Six women sitting with the shy heterosexual men, being very interested in what they have to say, striking a conversation. 72 minutes total. And then they go into the real experiment, whatever it was. And then next day, they are invited for the same experiment again.

And once again, they go through the exact same procedure. For 72 minutes, they sit down with 6 women who are very interested in what they have to say.

And of course, what really the experiment was interested in was what effect does this have. What effect does this behavior have on their shyness? And it had radical effects. So over the next 6 months, when they followed upon these, these men suddenly became far less anxious. In general, and specifically around women. They became less shy. These men often for the first time in their lives, initiate relationships and start to date after 144 minutes of intervention. Radical difference.

But there was a problem. What's the problem with many of these psychological experiments? That you have to debrief. Exactly. You have to debrief. So six months later, the study was over. The researchers invite the men in and tell them this was just a study. And these women were actually part of the experiment- they were told to seem interested. Cruel, right? Well, less than they thought. It made no difference to these men. Because by this time, they were much more outgoing. They were doing well with the opposite sex. They were going on dates. They were less shy. It started a positive spiral. It didn't matter at all. 144 minutes changed their lives, as far as the dating was concerned at least, if not more. Why?

Think back to Bandura's work on self-efficacy. Nothing breeds success like success. When they succeeded, they did well, they saw themselves doing well- self-perception theory. Certain conclusions about who they are, what they are and that led to an upward spiral, and continued that upward spiral. Yeah, we talked about 'fake it till we make it', then watch Marva Collins. Chapters of the Fathers. Pirkei Avot. One of the seminal Jewish texts: "Those whose deeds exceed their wisdom, their wisdom shall endure but those whose wisdom exceeds their deeds, If we just-remember what I talked about- if we just go to a workshop or a class, and understand it on the cognitive level, even have an ah ha moment, a break through, nothing will happen, unless we

follow our new found wisdom or understanding with deeds, with action. Why?

Because we first make our habits, and then our habits make us. And if we are before the workshop or class here, and then our attitude changes but our behavior doesn't, our attitude will be pulled down over time by our habits. So it's only, if we also change our habits over time, if we start doing things, if we, for example, put ourselves on the line- cope. Or if we start doing the gratitude exercise or writing letters on the regular basis, or starting physical exercise- arguably being most powerful intervention, to deal with anxiety, depression as well as the ADHD. And that's when we start doing these things right after the change is going to be ephemeral we are going to go back to where we were before. Lasting, permanent change- attitude change has to be matched by deeds, by behavior.

Dan Millman- I mentioned him in class a couple of weeks ago, The way of peaceful warrior, talks about the importance of action and change. He says, quote, " To change the course of your life, choose one of two basic methods. One. You can direct your energy and attention toward trying to fix your mind, find your focus, affirm your power, free your emotions and visualize positive outcomes so that you can finally develop the confidence to display the courage to discover the determination to make the commitment to feel sufficiently motivated to do what it is you need to do. Two. Or you can just do it." You know, sometimes, easier said than done. However, very often, you know, jumping into the water, just doing it, taking action has the same effect as all the preparation, or even the better effect, and leads to an upward spiral.

OK. Then we talked about coping and exiting your comfort zone. Parents, please close your eyes at this point. Alright. And I ended by talking about attaining your 'optimum levels of discomfort'. What does this mean? What does this mean? So we can look at approaches to change or reactions to change, behavioral change along the

It's wonderful. However, when we are in the comfort zone, very little change happens. If you go beyond that, we get to our stretch zone. This is what we call the optimal discomfort zone. This is where change actually happens. Beyond that is the panic zone. This is where we have anxiety and difficulty. This is the place that is usually unhealthy. Unhealthy for change. Because very often, we can go back on where we were before. You can think about this with a metaphor: the comfort zone would be freezing water. The stretch zone would be flowing water. The panic zone would be boiling water. Again, a lot of movement, but out of control and potentially dangerous. The best way to be usually is in the stretch zone.

You'll read about it next week when you read about flow. Flow is when you have optimal level of arousal, optimal level of tension. When the task that you are doing, or whatever you are doing, is not too difficult nor too easy. See what I did at the end of last class was certainly, as I said, as you saw I hope, out of my comfort zone. However, it wasn't enough- well, maybe- but probably not in the panic zone. Why? Because I already know you- we have been together for over a month. It's already passed at the drop date- so, too late for you. So I wasn't taking that much of the risk. It was just stretching. And it was important for me to do... I mean, really personally important for me to do it. Because it does stretch me and get me more in touch with my humanity.

Or for example, let's say you want to start an exercise in gym. You realize how

important it is. You read the research. You are exposed to that research and you see it really has an important effect. And you start exercising. Well, if you have an exercise for 5 years and you got to start running 8 miles a day. That's a problem. You are over-stretching. You'll probably get injured. If you continue sitting in front of the TV

or playing gameboy, that's also not good for change. That's the comfort zone perhaps not good. Stretch will be "OK, let me start with walking for two miles a day and build it up gradually." Stretch myself, but not too much. Or if you think about starting to

your topic is, and you get anxious in front of an audience. You don't start giving a lecture in Sanders Theatre. You start initially with your friends, teammates. This is how I start with my squash teammates. I gave the first lecture to them and then I gave it to my family.

Gradually out of the comfort zone. A little bit of stretch and then build it over time. This is the health way of approaching change. Sometimes though, sometimes though, we have to go to the panic zone. why? Because something cannot be changed, or almost impossible to change

gradually. For example, addiction. If I'm addicted to drugs, it's very difficult to say, "well I'll just have a little bit less, inject a little bit less

today. A little bit less tomorrow." It usually has to be abrupt. And then we are in the boiling realm. Then we are in the panic zone. Quite literally at times, which is why we need help. In this area, we need someone to hold us. Someone to comfort us. Someone to protect us. Because it is such a volatile zone. And potentially dangerous. But generally, if you want to change, the healthy approach to change would be along the stretch zone. It's impossible to change in theory.

Now I have said it so many times and yet very often people who take the class, as you know, many of them do change. Many of them do say, "well my life is better today for having taken it." And other people say, "well I took the class and it didn't make a difference in my life. It was a fun experience at times- the pink shirt and others. But it didn't make a real lasting difference in my life." In every...almost all- not in all cases, but in almost all cases, it's because it wasn't behavioral change associated with the attitudinal change or with the insides or understandings or recognition. There has to be a bias for action.

And that bias for action- just name a few examples: to increase confidence- we do it by taking risks, not by talking and thinking about, or standing in front of the mirror and say to myself: "I have a lot of confidence. I have self-esteem. I'm great. I'm

terrific. I'm gorgeous." Not enough. How do we reduce stress in our lives? And we'll

talk about it next week. By simplifying, by doing less rather than more. We'll talk about how actually doing less at times doesn't just lead to more happiness, it also leads to more success, more creativity as well as productivity. But we can't reduce the stress in theory. Chipping away through the gratefulness, creating more positive channels, becoming more of a benefit finder over time. It takes time. Doesn't happen

overnight. The nice thing though is that when we are afraid, when we think it's too much for us to take certain action, we can use our internal simulator.

Remember the mind doesn't know the difference between the real thing and the imaginary thing? And if we imagine something, if we are in the CBT language, if we engage in exposure, either through the imagination or through actual action, when we engage in exposure, over time, we become confident, which as I told you, what I do, preparing for lectures, seeing myself, doing it in my mind's eye, and the mind doesn't know the difference, in the real and in the imagined. And overtime, we'll become more confident. It's a good start. It's not enough. But certainly goes hand in hand and

a very useful technique to explore and to try. So all this is well and good. I'm sure some of you are

thinking about, and actually some came after class last time and talked to me about it and said, "OK, so we know action is important, but there is a problem. And the problem is that I don't or many people don't have enough discipline to engage in this action, to get out and run three times or five times a week. We are lazy. It's much more fun playing with our Nintendo than going and doing yoga for an hour, at least initially. So I don't have enough discipline for change.

I just want a quick show of hands. Be honest. Put up your hand if you believe that if you had more self-discipline- now you may have a lot of self-discipline or very little self-discipline, but if you had more self-discipline, you could potentially be happier and/or more successful. If you had more self-discipline? Be honest. I mean my hand is

very much up. OK, so it's most people think that. So I have good news for you and bad news for you. I'll start with the bad, because I'd like to finish on the positive. So the bad news is you aren't going to get any more self-discipline. What you have is what you got and what you will get. That's it. Sorry. Tough luck. Most people, most people, overwhelmingly majority of people think they need or want more self-discipline and believe that they don't have enough.

And most, just about all people cannot get any more self-discipline. Nature. That's

it. So that's the bad news. The good news: it's actually not that important, neither for success, nor for happiness. You can be more successful and happier with the self-discipline that you currently have. How? If you change your focus from relying on self-discipline for bringing about change to introducing rituals. Changing your focus from self-discipline to rituals.

I am going to talk about an idea now that is part of... that is talked about in greater length in *The Power of Full Engagement* by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz. An excellent, excellent book. And what they are talking about is essentially a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift, where we need to stop trying to get more self-discipline, because that, in and of itself is not enough for success, for well-being, for change. And it's because people rely on self-discipline for change. That is the reason why most organizational as well as individual change efforts fail.

So let me share with you a fun study. This was done by Roy Baumeister, one of the leading social psychologists of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Great researcher. Here was what he did. He brought in a group of people individually. So the person walks into the experiment. And they are told, once again, || you have to wait in

this room, waiting room for the experiment to start. So the person sits down. There is a table right next to that person. And on the table, there's a bowl. And in the bowl, there are freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. Just came out of the oven. Smell the

aroma, engulfing them. You know like those cartoons, going into their nose. Phenomenal smell. They are sitting there, next to the chocolate chip cookies that are in a bowl. The experimenter puts and says, "I'll come and pick you about 10 minutes for the experiment." They walk out. And as they are walking out, they tell them, "oh just by the way, these chocolate chip cookies, they are for the next experiment. So if you don't mind, don't touch them." So you are sitting there, almost dying, but you are

not touching it. And ten minutes later, the experimenter does come in, takes you to the experiment. The experiment is very difficult. Very difficult. Very difficult test that you need to take. A test that most people don't solve and requires a lot of perseverance and hard work. But most people, even with perseverance and hard work do not solve it. So the outcome measure, what the researcher is interested in is mostly how much did you persevere before giving up on that test. How much did you persevere before giving up on that test? That was the outcome measure, the dependent variable. Second group, randomly picked, come into the same room, sitting on the same chair, have the same bowl on the table. But instead of chocolate chip cookies, what they have in the bowl are red beetroots. Freshly baked. Just came out of the oven. And they are sitting there. And the experimenter is about to walk out, says, "just one more thing. If you don't mind, don't touch those beetroots. They are for the next experiment." OK. Fine. So

you are sitting there for 10 minutes. 10 minutes later, the experimenter comes in, takes you to the "real" experiment. Sitting down, you take the exact same test. The exact same puzzle. And once again, how long will you persevere before giving up? Think about for yourself for a second. Who do you think persevered more? The chocolate chip cookies group? Or the beetroots group? Think for yourself for a second. By the way, I guessed wrong when I answered this question. OK. Significantly more perseverance- significantly more, wasn't close- the group that had the beetroots persevered a lot more.

Why? I wouldn't understand. The mechanism- and he did some more experiment to

explain the mechanism. It's because the chocolate chip cookie group had used self-discipline not to touch the cookies, though (inaudible) they really wanted to touch it. But they couldn't. So they used their quota of self-discipline. And when they went

into the "real" experiment, what happened was that they had little or no self-discipline left And that, that maze, that experiment, that test required a lot of self-discipline. The point of this study is we all have limited amount of self-discipline. And the question is what do we used it on.

Another question for you. How many people here have, those of you who did set new year resolutions? Put your hand up if you fulfilled every single one of the new year's resolutions that you ever set for yourself. Put your hand up. Every single new year's resolution, if you did set new year resolutions. A bit higher, please. Well, I certainly didn't. But here's another question for you. How many people here...this is an important question, so please, please put your hand up if the

answer is affirmative. How many people here brush their teeth this morning? Put your hand up high. hew! I'm glad to see this. You can all talk to me after, real close. So let me just imagine what happened this morning, this scenario. So you got up in the morning. You were tired. And then you said to yourself, "OK, today is the day. Today is the day. I am going to do it! I am going to brush my teeth this morning!" Right? And to really motivate you as you got out of bed : Here I come now! I mean, here I come to brush... And you brush your teeth, right? Today is the day! Because I have 1504! I'm going to brush my teeth! Yes! No, of course not. You know, you rolled off the bed- you know, barely alive. You probably don't remember you brushed your teeth, because you were asleep still.

You know why? Why did everyone, I think, I hope everyone brush their teeth this morning, whereas no one, no one person out of more than 600 students fulfilled their new year's resolutions? Why? Because new year resolutions rely on self-discipline.

Brushing our teeth relies on a ritual. We do it everyday. It's automatic. Now there are

rituals- we know brushing our teeth is important. People won't talk to us if we don't. But we also know that physical exercise is very important. And yet most people in the world, not at Harvard, but in the world, don't do physical exercise and pay very high price for it.

You know it always amazed me when people used to comment on my incredible self-discipline when I was a squash player. It always amazed me because I don't see myself as a person with self-discipline. You know we don't have chocolate chip cookies at home. And if we do, Tommy hides them. Because if there were, they would disappear two minutes later. Zero self-discipline when it comes to these things. And yet, with squash, I did have, well people thought and what I thought for many years- self-discipline. Because I would get up in the morning and go for my run. I would then go to school and after school, straight to the court have a session with my coach- regular session with my coach, then play games, matches, and then as you can see, went to the gym and worked out. Every single day. And I went home, did my homework and went to bed. It was a ritual. That is what athletes do: they have rituals, which is why they are able to maintain what seems from the outside, such high levels of discipline, at times super human's. It's not. It's rituals.

Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz: "Building rituals requires defining very precise behaviors and performing them at very specific times — Let me give you some personal examples. Physical exercise deeply held value for me. Has always been, and especially now when I know the research, the data on physical exercise. So I have a

ritual: three times a week, for 30 and 40 minutes, I run. After that, after that, do my stretching. I know how important yoga and meditation is for me. I have a ritual and I do it. First thing when I wake up in the morning, a few deep breaths- We'll talk about it more after break. It's a ritual.

Every time when I teach here, every time when I get

up in front of the audience, I run before. This morning, I ran. On Tuesday, I ran twice as hard. Why? Because it releases anxiety. It helps me. Globally, generally and specifically for the class. Another very important value for me: my wife- our relationship. See the movie? Hitch? Fantastic movie. It's a very important value for me. And therefore, my wife and I have rituals. And we have two ritual dates a week. Now when people hear it, they say, "Come on! where is the spontaneity of love?" Well, there is a lot of spontaneity in terms of what we do during these dates. But the dates are set in stone. And if I'm travelling or my wife is travelling, we miss the date, we make up for it after. Why? Because if we didn't have this ritual, then we have two dates a decade, as opposed to a week.

And a deeply held value for both of us is our relationship. In our modern world, there are so many conflicting demands in our time. Rituals are not just important- they are absolutely necessary. If we are to do the things that are important for us, that we care about. Other examples of rituals: writing a thank you note. Once a week, once a month. Making a gratitude visit. Once a month, once a month, once every two months. Doing the gratitude exercise on a daily basis. These are rituals that we can introduce and can actually make an important difference. We also have ritual dinners with the family as a whole. So every shabbat dinner, Friday night dinner, we have together with the family. It's a ritual. It's a wonderful ritual. During the week, we also have

dates when we are together, because family is an important value to us. Now sometimes, for example, because of travel or other reasons, rituals are broken. Then you can make up for it later. They can also be negative rituals. Three hour of not checking email. I know it's hard. But it's an important ritual. And we'll talk about the effect of having our email on constantly Because when we are constantly connected to technology, we are often disconnected from the important things in our lives. We'll talk about that after break.

Rituals. Introduce rituals. One of the fears that people have when they hear about rituals is they say "well that will take away from my productivity. And if not productivity, creativity." Not so. In fact, the exact opposite is the case. If you look,- yeah, this is a historical research- if you look at all the great artists, whether it's writers, the Hemingways, whether it's the Davincis- they had a ritual in their life. And the ritual was, for example, "from 7 to 10 am in the morning, I write, no matter what", "6 to 10 at night- if I am more of a night person, I paint". They had rituals. And it's because of these rituals that they were able to be creative. Because then they could think about their subject materials as opposed to million other things: "Well, maybe I should be doing something else and there are other distractions"- no! There was a ritual. That's what I did now. Almost mindless getting there- just like we brush our teeth. But when they were there, there were space, openness to be creative.

Now the key is to give yourself time to create the ritual. You see, maintaining a ritual, requires some self-discipline, but not a lot. Creating a ritual requires a lot of self-discipline. Once again,

because we go back to our old habits. Let's do a quick exercise. So I want you to just take your hands and just fold them. Fold your hands for a minute. Alright. Now continue folding your hands- only this time, in the opposite direction, meaning this hand below and this hand above. Yeah. Yeah. I see especially the men are not really getting it. But it's OK. Now how does that feel? Not comfortable right? Now this is such a simple movement. You know, folding hands! And yet we feel very uncomfortable- something is wrong here. And we want to go back to our folding before. Much more comfortable. We first make our habits and then our habits make us. OK. So the key is, here we are talking about a very simple change- folding hands. How much more difficult is it when we have had habits that we cultivated for many years and are much more significant in our lives? Very difficult to go...to change them. It takes time.

William James, as I mentioned before, says it takes 21 days to change a habit. Loehr and Schwartz in their book, *The Power of Full Engagement*, talk about 30 days to change it. And of course it depends on what habit. So give ourselves 30 days to start the gratitude. Give ourselves 30 days to build the new ritual of exercising regularly. And the key is to give yourself no more than one or two rituals each 30 days. Why? Because as we mentioned earlier, it takes a lot of self-discipline to create a ritual and we don't have much self-discipline, which is why when we have a list of 10 changes that we want to introduce in our lives today, we end up doing none. We end up doing none. Because we are over-extending our self-discipline and we break down. It takes a lot of discipline to start a ritual, but once we start it, after a month when it's habituated, when it's grooved in, when the neural pathway has begun to form, then we can move onto the next ritual and introduce it, if we are ready.

No more than two. Ideally one ritual. Next week in your response paper, you are going to choose a ritual, two rituals for this month that hopefully you will, you will also introduce. Because there cannot be change without behavioral change. Loehr and Schwartz: "Incremental change is better than ambitious failure. Success feeds on itself." We see it on individual level. We see it on organizational level. John Carter from the business school does a lot of work on change in organizations in the realm of leadership. What he talks about a lot is how you need small successes and then build

them these successes. The Dalai Lama: —There isn't anything that isn't made easier

through constant familiarity and training. Through training we can change; we can transform ourselves."

You know, one thing that happened to me when I was an undergraduate. It happened in my sophomore year. I didn't...I played at the Varsity team. Didn't have a good season. My sophomore year was burned out- got injured. And couldn't wait for the 1st of March. March 1 is the last, and March 2 sometimes, is the last day of the

season. And I couldn't wait, because after that I could stop playing squash and focus on my studies.

Then I could get a lot of work done- because with squash, we were at the courts, you know trained physically for two hours but total three hours a day. Weekends- we were travelling mostly or had matches at home. Mornings- at least two mornings a week we were lifting weights or in the gym. So it was rough. A lot of work and I said I can't wait to have the freedom without squash, especially giving that I wasn't enjoying that much at that point. Can't wait. Not to do anymore and just to focus on my classes. Catch up on all the readings and writings and stuff. March 1 came. I stopped playing completely. And instead of becoming more productive. I became far less productive.

Now I see a lot of you nodding. The athletes know what I am talking about. Why? Why did I become more, or rather less productive? Procrastination- wow! Skyrocketed. Why? Because for years I've been told I'm a person with self-discipline. And I started to believe it. Yeah, I have a lot of self-discipline. Look at me! I trained so hard. I worked, you know, when I played on the circus six hours a day. That's a lot of self-discipline! And suddenly, the squash season ended. And I said, "alright, let's see this discipline at work!" And I wasn't getting any work done. Why? Because I gave up my rituals. You see, during the season, those of you who played varsity or very involved in music or club know that- when you are investing a lot in a certain organization, your time has to be ritualized. So you know you are in practice then or you are ? in these hours, or you are having meetings at these hours. And after that you have to go back and work. Because you only have two hours to do. And you want to get an OK night sleep. You have rituals. And you are productive and you are creative. And suddenly the rituals go away. You said, "OK now I'm gonna work more". The exact opposite happens. Because we have a limited amount... It was only when I came to terms of fact that I have a limits amount of self-discipline. It's only when I came to terms with the human nature- nature should be commanded must be obeyed. It was

only then that I actually became productive. Because I created new rituals in my life after that. Rituals- very important and significant. The only way for lasting change. Let me talk about cognition now.

The C. So we talked about affect- the emotions; we talked about behavior how important that is both acute and gradual. Let's talk about cognition. We'll talk again about cognitive reconstruction which is the gradual way of bringing about change. And then we'll talk about the fast way of bringing about change, which is the Eureka experience, the ah ha moment. So first, cognitive reconstruction. As we mentioned before, an interpretation is a neural pathway. If I interpret the world as a fault finder, the fortified neural pathway in my brain are the negative ones, these in experience and I go immediately to the negative interpretation and that gets reinforced over time. If I'm a merit finder, I would look the exact same experiences and interpret them very differently. Because I have very different neural pathways in the brain. Of course, there are consequences to how we interpret our experiences. Not necessarily that things happen for the best, but as a merit, as a benefit finder- sorry, I change that.

As a benefit finder, looking more at the, at the positive with each experience. Now remember the study on the identical twins and how much genes actually matter. That only account for 55% of the variance. So here is the story that's told in many intro to psych textbooks And it's about twins who were raised in a same home and their father was abusive toward them, toward their mother. He was very often drunk, very often on drugs, and really an awful, awful childhood- the worst you can imagine. And these twins grow up in that home with that father. And they go off. They leave their home, run away from home later on in life and they reach the age of 30. And then at the age of 30, a psychologist who is doing research on twins goes and visits them. And he goes to the first twin. And what he sees there: the twin is in a relationship. He's abusing his family, very often drunk, very often on drugs. Then the psychologist is able to find

him in a moment of soberness and says to the twin, "what's going on? What are you doing? What's happening here?" And the twin who knows that the psychologist is doing research on the effect of genes and the effect of upbringing, says, "you know my father. You know the kind of childhood that I endured. How do you expect me to be any other way?" And the psychologist who knows the effect of upbringing shrugs. And then he goes to the second twin. The second twin happens to be at the exact same age as the first one. He goes to the second twin- also 30 years old, walks into the house and cannot believe his eyes. Such peace. Such equanimity. Such love. Between him and his wife, and the kids. He's doing well in his career, doing well with his family. He comes back again after a while- see maybe there was a fluke; maybe he's putting on a show, but no- it's the real thing. Phenomenal family life. Phenomenal professional life. And he goes to him and says, in disbelief, "how?" Now the twin also

knows that he's doing research and he says, "what do you mean 'how'? You know my father. You know how I was raised. You know what he did to us. How do you expect me to be any other way? I know how much he hurt us. How do you expect me to be any other way like him?"

Same experiences. Monozygotic twins. Same genes. Radically different interpretation: one continuing the hell that he endured as a child; the other creating a heaven. All because of interpretation. What do you do with it? Well, I have no choice. This is the way I was raised. This is the model- passive victim. The other- I'm not going to be like that. I'm not going to be like my father- active agent. So much of it is a matter of interpretation. Happiness, wellbeing, as we mentioned many times before, is not so much contingent on external circumstances, not so much contingent on our status or the status of our bank account. It's contingent on our state of mind. The thing that you'll remember though is that there are no shortcuts unfortunately. There are no quick fixes unfortunately. If there were, I promise you I would've told you. If I find out next week about a shortcut, even if it's over spring break, you'll get an email from

me. But I don't think there are.

And very often, the hope of finding a quick fix leads to more unhappiness. Here are some examples of cognitive reconstruction. This is work done by Tomaka on whether we perceive activity as a challenge or as a threat. Because we can perceive the exact same activity and cognitively reconstruct our understanding of it. So let me give you an example. When I, after being thrown out of Cambridge, I applied for PHD programs. One of the programs I applied to is here. I was hoping to get in. And when I got in, I wanted to come back, because overall, I had a very good experience here as an undergrad, with all the difficulties and hardship, I was glad, wanting to be back. And when I got in, you know suddenly I became a little bit concerned. Because I said- you know I experienced a lot of anxiety as an undergrad. A lot of anxiety as an undergrad. And I said, I don't want to relive that again. Maybe I should go else where. And then I turned around and I said, "OK. Instead of looking at Harvard as a threat, to me, to my calm. I'm going to look at it as a challenge." And my challenge became explicitly- I mean I wrote it in my journal, wrote about it, thought about it explicitly. My goal over the six years that I got my PHD was to maintain calm Because I said to myself, || if I can maintain calm at Harvard, I can maintain calm anywhere." And I

worked on it. I really worked on it. And it became a challenge and just that change helped me get so much more out of my experience here as a graduate student. Even through the hardships, the generals and the failures, and the anxiety. But overall- a much better experience.

Recently I just did it. So you know, once in a while I travel right after class. So three weeks ago, I travelled to Florida. And I have a very important talk there with the company that I really wanted to work with. It was my first event there. Company that I cared about. And I think it is doing fantastic things around the world and I really want it to do well. And I felt a lot of anxiety before that talk. And I cognitively

reconstructed it. I said, "OK. It's anxiety inducing, permission to be human experience, but let's look at it as a challenge." That I have this wonderful opportunity to speak to such a great company, such wonderful people. I'm going to make the best of it. Turned it from a threat into a challenge, into opportunity. And that made a big difference in my approach to it.

Think about as in your life. What is it? Is it a play you want to try out for? Is it someone you want to ask out? Is it speaking up in section? This is a study those who take Psych 1 or Psych 15 have encountered that, the work of Schachter & Singer, back in early 60s. Today it would never be able to get this past the ethics committee. Just like Mailgram wouldn't be able to get his study passed. Here was what they did. So they brought people into the experiment and injected them with epinephrine. Epinephrine arouses the body. It...shots of adrenaline. But they thought it was just vitamin C. They didn't know it's epinephrine.

And then they were sitting in the experiment, waiting again for the "real" experiment. They were sitting in the waiting room. And while they were sitting they were asked to fill out a questionnaire.

Now remember, they just got a shot of adrenaline, but they didn't know they got a shot of adrenaline. So they were sitting, filling in a questionnaire. And in the first condition, the questionnaire had very provocative questions, to say the least. For example, one of these questions was so "how many men did your mom sleep with before she got married to your dad?" That's one of the que... You know they would never be able to get away with this study today, but you know, back in the 60s. So they were answering this. Now next to them, next to them, there is a confederate- someone who they don't know is part of the study. And this guy is going ballistic. "How dare they" You know... Really getting angry. And you get angry too. And you get even angrier than the control group who went through the exact same thing, except for the fact that they didn't get the injection. So what they

did was they looked, they saw their bodies is getting very aroused and they interpreted this arousal as "oh I must be really angry". And they really did get, even angrier than they would have. They got angry in the control group as well but less angry than those who were injected the epinephrine.

Now second condition. Also injected. Had a questionnaire without any provocative questions. And next to them there was again a confederate, whom they thought was also doing the experiment. And that confederate found by happenstance, a hula hoop on the floor and started to shake it. You know, dance and... You know it was going crazy- they are happy and laughing. And the person who was just injected epinephrine went wild. So happy and joyous- much more happy than the control group, who were in the room with a person dancing with a hula hoop, but did not get the injection. In

other words, he interpreted the raising in adrenaline "Oh I must be really happy now || .

And they were really happier. In other words, very often it's the interpretation- in this case, of a physical symptom that determines what we will feel. Joy or anger. Because they are quite similar. In both of them, there is an adrenaline rush. So how do we interpret a situation as an arousal or, as euphoria or as anger?

Here's another study. This is done by Lee Ross and his colleagues. They asked people, college students- he's from Stanford- college students to volunteer their most generous, benevolent friends to name them and their most competitive, cut-throat friends and tell them who they are. And they contacted them to be part of the study. And what they wanted to see was their behavior in a situation in a game where you can cooperate or you can be competitive. The intervention was that these students, randomly divided into two groups. And in the two groups, there were people who were deemed very competitive or people who were deemed very generous and benevolent. And in the second group, same thing- half of the people were very generous and benevolent; half of the people were very, very competitive and

cut-throat, as perceived by their friends. And in the first group, they got a game and the game was called "the community game". And the second group got the exact same game, the game where you have the opportunity either to cooperate or to compete. But instead of a community game,

even though it was the exact same game, it was called "Wall Street game". And they wanted to see how many people cooperate versus how many people compete. And they wanted to see what predicts it.

Well, whether the kids, the participants, were deemed cooperative or competitive, predicted nothing. Nothing. Whether or not they would compete or cooperate. What predicted everything was whether they were in the "community game" or in the "Wall Street game". If they were in the "community game", they were much more likely to cooperate. If they were in the "Wall Street game", whether they were generous, benevolent, or cut-throat, competitive, they were much more likely to be cut-throat and competitive. In other words, how we frame a situation- community, Wall Street- can make all the difference. Threat, opportunity- maybe the exact same thing. How we frame it can make all the difference. This is a study done by one...(part missing)...the quest. A very important question which is how can we raise the level of volunteerism, at Harvard and beyond And the wonderful answer that she came up with is let's get students as well as people in society at large to reframe how we look at volunteering, rather than as duty, something I have to do. Why don't I look at it as a privilege? I have the privilege of helping. And it is a real privilege.

Remember the study on kindness? One of the best interventions for wellbeing. It is a real privilege to give, to help. And when people reframe this, they are much more likely to volunteer. This has implications for child rearing. This has implications, of course, for education. It has implications for society as a whole. This is a topic I am going to talk about a lot. I am going to dedicate much time when we discuss relationships. But just very briefly, this understanding for me transformed, literally

transformed my relationship with my wife. It transformed... It is transforming my relationship with my friends, as well as students and colleagues. You see, we go into a relationship. Most people think that important thing about relationship is that we are validated, as we get pats on our back. Now that's important in our relationship. Surely important to be validated in any relationship, whether it's with students/teacher, whether it's with friends, certainly in romantic relationship.

However, what David Schaech talks about is that primarily if we want long-term, successful, thriving, passionate relationships, the first objective, the primary objective is to go into relationship to be known. To be known, rather than to be validated, meaning going in there and saying "OK so how can my partner get to know me even better?" Doing it gradually of course. On the first date, you don't want to reveal all your secrets. Doing it gradually. You know, thinking about it, but opening up more and more. And couples who over time open up more and more are able to sustain the relationship as well as their passion, over time. And again, I am going to talk about much more... I am going to devote two classes at least to relationships. This is going to be one of the central pillars of successful long-term relationships.

Also with the students, the same applies. You know when I initially started to teach, I really wanted the validation from the students. So how can I have my students perceive me as a good teacher? I want them to like me. And you know, that's important for everyone. We all like to be liked. However, when I switched my focus- and yeah, I still want to be liked- but my main focus is I want my students to know me. I want them to know the topic that I'm most passionate about in the world. That really changed a lot. It's no longer to be validated, i.e. to appear perfect, but it was to be known as a human being, of course- permission to be human. And that actually improved my teaching a great deal and I enjoyed it so much more. Because there is so much less pressure on us in a relationship, any relationship, when we go in with the

intention of being known of expressing rather than impressing. We can feel so much lighter. And the wonderful thing is, that it also makes the relationship so much healthier.

But again, much more on it- because it is so important. So important topic. We talked about this a lot. How do we perceive failure, as a stumbling block? A catastrophe? Or as an opportunity? As a growth experience? And that can make all the difference. We'll talk about it after spring break when we discuss perfectionism and the fear of failure.

And finally, the study that you read by Ali Crum and Ellen Langer. So just give you a little bit background about the study and I will briefly mention it, hopefully you've read it already. Ali Crum was my student for, since her freshman year. I was her TF when I taught with Phil Stone. And then I was her thesis advisor with Ellen Langer. And this was the topic of her thesis. When Ellen Langer came up with the idea for the thesis, and she told Ali and me "this is what I think would be a very interesting study", I took Ellen aside after the study- after the meeting, after Ali went away. And I told her "Ellen I don't think it's fair. I don't it's fair that Ali will do her thesis on it." Because the thesis is a very tough experiment- you'll hear about it if you haven't read about it in a minute. "If we take a lot of time from her, she's not going to get any results." Now you can write your senior thesis with getting no result, without getting a result, that's OK. But I said, || why waste her time, her senior year?" And she said to me, || will work." I said to her, || nit won't." And boy, did it work!

Now I've learned since not to argue with Ellen Langer because she has ideas that you would never think would work, but they do like the study we mentioned with the 1979 "I'm going back to 1959" or with the eye test, being simply in the flying simulator improves your eyesight. Again, ideas that seem fantastic, but she proves them right. So the same happened here with this study. The study was Ali went to

hotels and worked with the ladies who were cleaning the hotels. And she went to them to two groups and told both groups the importance of physical exercise. And she said, "this is, you know, something brought to you by your hotel, just to show you how important exercise is." And then

she tested them on all these physical measures, whether it was body fat, blood sample- how much fat they had in their blood, weight, psychological measures- depression, anxiety, and so on and so on. And what she did was... to the one group, she just left them after all these tests. The second group, she said to them, and this was the intervention, "you know the work you are doing is actually physical exercise." And she calculated how much calories it takes to pick up sheets, to go like this and then to put it on a bed, how much calories it takes to actually vacuum. She estimated all those things and then she gave them the statistics of how many calories you should expend a day doing exercise. And she says, || what

you are doing is working out actually." This was the intervention. And she went back

8 weeks later.

8 weeks later, she ran the exact same tests again. And some of the results that she found- some of them are in the article, others are not. Blood pressure decreased significantly. The fat in the blood decreased significantly. Body weight, after the 8 weeks, for the intervention group, not for the control group. Control group: no change over that period! Body weight decreased significantly. Their self-esteem went up. Depression levels went down. Anxiety levels went down. And energy levels went up.

All, as a result. Now, she asked, || did you do anything differently? Or you are

exercising more than you did before?" No difference between the control group and the intervention group. The only difference was perception. Now they may have worked harder. We don't know. It may be just the mind over body. We don't know. But the fact is because they reframed, they reconstructed their experience from a chore- "I have to, you know, clean 30 rooms a day" to "this is an exercise; this is good for me".

example of acute change. This is the change that happens like a sledgehammer. And this is the Eureka experience. There's a lot of talk, a lot of research, a lot of interest in this area of the Eureka experience, the ah ha moment, the insight- so valuable, so important. And there's much misunderstanding about it. Because people think we suddenly have this insight, not so. There's a whole process involved. And the process begins with immersion. This is when we prepare for the insight. This is when we learn.

Howard Gardner has done a lot of work on extraordinary individuals throughout the world. And what he found is that generally for people to become the experts in a field, to become Creative in a field, they have to have invested at least ten years of very hard work. This is the preparation. This is when you immerse yourself in the material. Look for the example of Beethoven. Those of you who listen to his music and know his trajectory: Symphony 1 and 2- Mozart. Sounds very similar to Mozart. 3rd Symphony, Eroica- it's Beethoven. He immersed himself a great deal in the music of the day- studied it and learned it. and then, after many years, was able to become Beethoven

and creative, and transformed the whole field of music. Being the first of the Romantics. Second stage, after we prepare- and it takes, again, a lot of hard work, whether it's preparation that was done by Bill Gates when he was skipping class or whether it's Bill Clinton. A lot of preparation before you become an expert in the field and are able to introduce Creativity- have that eureka, the insight. Second stage: incubation. And you see all the creative individuals: after you immerse yourself in an

area, you do nothing. You just allow it to marinate. For example, there's no

coincidence that we get some of our best ideas in a shower. It's no coincidence that Archimedes got his best idea in the bath Mozart used to spend hours a day, just driving around Salzburg and then suddenly he would have the ah ha experience, the eureka. He said, || I could hear the symphony in a second." In a second, he could hear

hours driving around in his carriage and suddenly would have the insight, "OK, this is what the story is about." And then he would go and write it. Incubation is so important.

J.P.Morgan: "I can do a year's work in nine months, but not in twelve." J.P.Morgan understood, you know, arguably be the greatest entrepreneur this country has ever seen, understood the importance for creativity of taking time off. Today, business people, leaders don't take enough time off. Because we think it's a waste of time. We think that if we just sit there and do nothing, we are really doing nothing. Well, no. The mind works. The mind works and the mind needs it for the creative insight. In fact, leaders- and many of you will go into leadership positions- need time off more than anyone else. Because they need to be creative. They need to think about the next thing for the company, for the organization. Taking time in- invaluable. Not just for memory, also for creativity. One of the things I do when I work with, as a consultant in organizations is I just take the management on a retreat with no agenda. We are just going to hang out. And very often, within as little as half an hour or an hour, ideas begin to come out. Why? Because as the first time, they have time, no coincidence that we often wake up with a solution to a problem we had. Because subconscious mind is making connections then.

Joseph Campbell: "You must have a room, or a certain hour or so a day, when you don't know what was in the newspapers that morning, you don't know who your friends are, you don't know what you owe anybody, you don't know what anybody owes you. This is a place where you can simply experience and bring forth what you are and what you might be. This is the place of creative incubation. At first, you may find that nothing happens there. But if you have such a sacred place and use it, it's

during this incubation times, it's during these time-ins, during the time when you have

the opportunity to reflect, whether it's on the response paper, or just hang out and

listen to music. That's very often when the ah ha moment comes. The eureka experience. The one

second "I see the symphony".

You know, in some way, you can think about an analogy of how this happens. You can think about stage one. Or you can think about in a context of a sexual intercourse. Of making love. Preparation and incubation can be the equivalent to foreplay. The eureka experience- the orgasm. Now the important thing to understand about this process is you have to go through preparation, incubation to get to the eureka experience. In other words, you need the foreplay. Did you hear that man? You need

the foreplay to get to the next level. It's important. It's part of the creative process. It's significant. It's very significant for love. It's significant also for this process. And then afterwards, after you've come up with the eureka, that's when you evaluate. You ask yourself, "Is this a good idea? Does it work? Or is it just something that you know women and..." Most ideas, most eureka experiences actually end up not working.

And therefore, evaluation is important. Is this really a good piece? Is this really a good idea for a story?- Shakespeare asked. Is this really a good idea for a philosophical treatise?- Descartes who spent a lot of time on his own reflecting. Is this a really good idea for a philosophical treatise? Is this a good business plan? Is this the next Facebook? Or is this just something that I had, you know, the idea that I had at 3 in the morning and someone has already done it or it won't work? Evaluation is important. There are many ideas out there- not all of them work. Or to go back to our analogy of making love. So you have the first stage- the foreplay. You have the orgasm and afterwards, here's the question that you may be asking when you evaluate it. Song: Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow (Sung by The Shirelles): Is this a lasting treasure Or just a moment of pleasure Can I believe the magic of your eyes Will you still love me tomorrow So tell me now, and I won't ask again, darling Will you still love me tomorrow Will you still love me tomorrow Will you still love me tomorrow

Dr.Tal Ben-Shahar

So do you know who they are? Not the parents. The students, do you recognize them? The Shirelles. The Shirelles. Actually my favorite group. Really. My daughter's name, some of you know, is Shebelle. And we were looking for a name that would make sense in Hebrew as well as in English. And my wife came up with the name Shebelle, which means in Hebrew "song of God" and you have the Shirelles. So it was just, when we found out, which was just the perfect name. You know what I love so much about it? You can see the navy tame the dance. I love that era! Just love it! Just love it. Anyway, go in YouTube and sign and do the Shirelles, you'll see other songs by them. So this is when you evaluate.

We are almost done. This is when you evaluate it. Is this something that will last? Is this

something that is real? A really good idea? A really good relationship? For example. After that, and this doesn't have a parallel to love-making- You elaborate. You elaborate on the ideas. So you write out, you write out the symphony. This is when you write out the treatise. This is when you make the business plan. When I put together this course, I went through this process. so I started off by preparing. So even though I had very good preparation before, you know I studied for the generals twice, teaching with Professor Philip Stone as... I was his TA, twice. TF. Even though I studied social psychology for many years and... I took time off, where I immersed myself in positive psychology material. I read the handbook of positive psychology which is a very good weapon to use. If anyone comes close, you can just throw at them. It's about this big. But very good.

I read hundreds of academic journal articles. And then I took time off. And during that time off, I talked about positive psychology, but I didn't work in positive psychology. I had conversation with my wife, with Phil Stone, with my brother about this. And that's when the eureka's came. That's when the insights came. I said, —OK so

this is how the course is going to be built. This is the spiral." Then I had the idea of PPEO, Post Peak Experience Order, as an idea, an ah ha moment. And afterwards, I evaluated it. I evaluated myself. I evaluated by talking to other people about it to see if it works and then I sat down and spent hours and hours and hours, writing out the lectures. All my lectures are written out. Obviously I don't read them. But in preparation, when I prepare for the lectures, I do read them a few times. That was the elaboration. That is the creative process, whether it's putting together a class, or putting together a great organization, of writing a great book or creating a great relationship. I'll see you next week.

Have a wonderful weekend.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY 12

Student: Hi. Good, morning. My name is Dana. I'm a freshman. Um, I'd like to tell you about a social program happening here at Harvard next week. My grandfather, who's Holocaust survivor,

is coming to give an account of his experiences. I think it'll be a really special opportunity to hear a moving account, a personal account of history. He has spoken at other universities, at the UN. His story is quite incredible. The event will take place at 730 in the Memorial Church, a week from today - Tuesday, March

18. For more information, you can find on the Facebook event. It's called "Surviving Auschwitz: A Holocaust survivor story". You could just Google... You could just check Holocaust under the Harvard network. And it'll be great if you could come. So any questions, please find me. My name is Dana. I always send you the message. I was the creator of the event. Thank you. Thank you, Tal.(Applause)

Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar: Hi. Good morning. So today what we are going to do is finish up the lecture on change, sum it up the ABCs- the affect, the behavior, the cognition, and then move on to a related topic which is setting goals, which will be the last topic that I'll address before we go on break. The... Last time I ended up by talking about the acute change that comes with a Eureka experience, with an ah hah, with an insight. And we talked about these five stages. And a couple of you contacted me after about this and said, "well, It's not that smooth" and it's absolutely right. This is a theory. This is an outline. When you write, when you come up with ideas, when you generate course, when you write a paper or write a thesis.

Some of you are thesis writers, what you do is very often mix them. So you have preparation. Then you write a little bit. And then you take a break. You have an insight. Then you go back to more preparation and on and on. This is just a general outline, which is useful in a few ways. First of all, it is useful in that we can understand by looking at it. There's no quick fix. None of the great creative artists, scientists, business people in history, created in a vacuum. Initially they became experts in their fields. They worked hard. They immersed themselves in the material. So that's the first important element to remember. No short cuts. We have to apply ourselves. Remember the secret of success? It's not just think, imagine, believe. It also has to have the component of hard work as well as passion. So all the successful people... Again, the best self-help books are biographies, good biographies that show you the process, not the "five easy steps". The second important thing beyond the importance of immersion of the preparation is the significance of taking time off. One of the first thing that leaders of today, one of the things they don't have today is time. It's the thing that they need most. Time off to incubate, to reflect, to metaphorically, or literally, sit in the bath and think. That incubation, the idle time stage. Remember J. P. Morgan's quote: And that's when the Eureka comes. That's when the good ideas come. It's actually after a good night's sleep. It's after "we do nothing for a while". It's when

we in the shower. The next important thing, component of this model is the evaluation part. You know, there are many good ideas, but very few ideas come to fruition and actually become a good idea for a business, or a good idea for a scientific paper, or a book, or whatever it may be. That's when the evaluation comes and that's when the elaboration comes. And these are no less important parts of the creative process.

It really is about 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. No short cuts. So to summarize: the ABCs- the affect (the emotion), the behavior (action), and the cognition (the thought). I want to talk about a technique, a simple technique- journaling that has remarkable, remarkable consequence. Just get a show of hands: how many people keep a journal or have kept a journal for significant amount of time? OK. That's great. That's great to see. We know from, from this course and research you encountered before how difficult change is. Sometimes programs that have been around for 5 years don't help. Very often interventions were millions and billions. It's about-100-billion-dollars-a year industry that change industries and organizations. Most of the interventions don't work. We know how difficult it is to change. And yet journaling?

Very solid research showing how much it helps. So let me share with you a study. This was done by the person who really brought journaling into the scientific realm. So there'd been people like Ira Progoff and others who had been talking about journaling for a very long time, but it was Jamie Pennebaker from University of Texas, Austin, who brought this idea to the scientific realm and really researched it. And here is what he did. What he did was bringing participants and have them do the following: on 4 consecutive days that they came in, each day, they would spend 15 minutes- that's all, 15 minutes, times for writing about the most difficult experiences. Now they knew that no one would see it. Or if they would see it, it would be without a name- completely confidential. So they were really able to treat it as their own journal.

And here was the instructions that these participants got. It's a little long but worth, I think, worth reading. "Write continuously about the most upsetting or traumatic experience of your entire life. In your writing, I want you to discuss your deepest thoughts and feelings about the experience. You can write about anything you want. But whatever you choose, it should be something that has affected you very deeply. Ideally, it should be about something you have not talked about with others in detail. It is critical, however, that you let yourself go and touch those deepest emotions and thoughts that you have. In other words, write about what happened and how you felt about it, and how you feel about it now. Finally, you can write on different traumas during each session or the same one over the entire study. Your choice of trauma for each session is entirely up to you." Simple instructions. Pretty straight-forward.

If you notice, you see the ABCs in it. So it says "write about what happened", which is the behavior essentially. Write about your deepest feelings- your affect, your emotions. And write about your thought and analyze it. The ABCs in journaling.

So when he did this study, initially the results came in- because one of the first things he looked at was the anxiety level, so when the results came in, disappointment. In fact, thinking of stopping the study, because this is what he found. So if we have this graph, this would be anxiety level. This would be time. He had a control group and the control group just wrote about anything that they wanted to write about. Show no change over time. So they started here, and they essentially,

straight line. The intervention group, the experimental group, after 4 days of writing about their most traumatic, most difficult experiences. They started at the same point. They were randomly divided. And then a rise in their anxiety. After each of the days and during the 4 days- rise in their levels of anxiety. At this point, he was thinking terminating the study- very disappointed. Because he got from personal experience- he knew that journaling helps him and knew other people who talk about it, who swear by

journaling. But then, once the 4 days are over, during the fifth, especially starting 6th,

7th and on days, this is what starts to happen. Their anxiety levels went down. Learning that they reach the same level as before, they continue to go down. And the most important thing is that they stabilized below the previous level. They stabilized below the previous levels of anxiety, when he followed these participants over a longer period of time up to a year. 4 times, 15 minutes- that's total of an hour. That's very little. And long lasting results. Think about it: this is also what we saw before.

Sometimes, brief interventions are extremely effective. Think about the shyness study that I spoke about last week after 12 sessions of 12 minutes with women who were interested in them, these shy heterosexual men change radically. So change can come in a relatively brief period of time if we know how to intervene. And journaling is one of these interventions. Now this is not going to be one of your response paper- it's too personal. I don't think it's appropriate to assign it, but I certainly do recommend that you do it. Follow specifically Pennebaker's instructions. Doesn't take that long. Do it on 4 days, 15 minutes, 20 minutes each time, just write whatever comes to mind. So it was reducing anxiety over time.

Other results of the study- and if you want to read much more about it, he has a wonderful book called "Opening Up". "Opening Up", by Jamie Pennebaker. They became healthier. So over the year of the study, they visited the doctor's office, compared to a control group, far less. In other words, it strengthened their immune system, not just their psychological immune system, their physiological immune system. Generally they were in a better mood. They were happier, more jovial, more benefit finders, after writing about their deepest traumas. They became more outgoing, less repressed, less suppressed. Now why is that? We talked about it often that positive emotions and painful emotions flow through the same pipeline. And if we suppress something, if we stop something, which is painful, we are very often

indirectly, inadvertently also suppressing the positive emotions, whereas here they open up, quite literally open up and allow these emotions to flow through them. They are essentially opening up a clogged channel- a clogged channel through which emotions, painful as well as positive emotions normally flow. And they experience higher levels of happiness. They are more open, more generous, as we saw also when you do the gratitude exercise. Very similar results.

There were gender differences, which is interesting. Now both sexes benefited from it. However, men benefited more than women. Think about it. Why do you think that is? It makes sense, if you think about it. Women benefited significantly got better, but men benefited even more. Why? Because women have, generally speaking- again, this is brush stroke stereotype- but generally speaking, women open up more. They speak more with their girl friends. They have closer friends and they talk about issues. Men still in our culture today are much closer because it's not cool to open up. It's not cool to give yourself the permission to be human, especially when others are listening. so women generally in their lives But still, even women who have strong supports systems still benefit from this exercise, which reminds me of another result of a study I mentioned months ago, the beginning of the course, which said women generally, again these are all averages, but in general, women- or rather men benefit more from marriage than women. For similar reason. Because women already have the supports system in place. Men, very often, for the first time they are with someone, who they feel comfortable enough opening up to. Again, both males and females benefit from a long-term relationship, but men generally tend to benefit more than women. For the same reason that he found gender difference here. Across cultures. This is done in China, in Japan, Mexico, Argentina, United States of course, Europe- replicated across cultures. In all cultures, people benefit from this study.

Here is another study, which took the exact opposite approach. So Laura King was

a student of Pennebaker, took the exact opposite approach and said, "let's study... (inaudible)... to see what happens when the individuals write about their most intensive positive experience. What she did specifically was taking the instructions from Abraham Maslow's work on peak experience. And here are the instructions. Once again, this was three times, 15 minutes, so 45 minutes total on three consecutive days. "Think of the most wonderful experience or experiences in your life, happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, by a book or painting or from some great creative moment. Choose one such experience or moment. Try to imagine yourself at that moment, including all the feelings and emotions associated with the experience.

Now write about the experience in as much detail as possible trying to include the feelings, thoughts, and emotions that were present at the time. Please try your best to re-experience the emotions involved." Essentially the exact opposite of Pennebaker. Results? Identical. Those who wrote about their peak experiences, their best experiences, visited the doctor's office less time- in other words, it strengthened their physiological immune system and experienced more happiness. So both psychological and physiological results. Now when you look at this, some of you may be thinking that "well, what about the Lyubomirsky study?" Remember the Lyubomirsky study? That said when you write about positive emotions. Actually you feel worse. Whereas you write about negative emotions, you do feel better as Pennebaker suggested. Here's the difference. The instructions that Laura King gave were mostly, were mostly about describing and re-experiencing, replaying your experience. It wasn't about analyzing "why did it happen", "how did it"... It was

rather how it happen- in other words, replaying it.

When the instructions- and this is the Lyubomirsky study- were analyze the experience: why it happened, how did you get there and so on and so on. That's why it

had the negative consequences over time, but just replaying the experience, just writing about how wonderful it is, re-experiencing emotionally what that was- that actually let you benefit.

Now the interesting question is why. Why are there such remarkable benefits to journaling? Let's understand the process, the mechanism. So there are a few things that are at play here. One of the things for example with positive emotions is that when you are replaying it, you are simply, you are fortifying the neural pathways. You replay, you imagine it again and you make it more likely to happen again. Just like when you have a river, remember the analogy from two weeks ago, you have a river, and the more water go through it, then the wider it becomes, and then the more water is likely to go into it. That's self-reinforcing nature of change. So the first thing, the first reason why writing especially about painful emotions but not just painful emotions, the reason why it helps is because of tension. We talked about ironic processing- Daniel Wegner's work from here. And what he talks about is that when we suppress unnatural phenomenon, it often intensifies. Be it thinking about a pink elephant or be it suppressing painful emotions. And when we give ourselves the permission to be human, we are much more likely to release it, to let go, which is why therapy helps, which is why sharing with friends, opening up helps, which is why journaling helps. This is the whole idea of suppression or repression.

The second thing that Pennebaker talks about is coherence. One of the things that he finds is that the individuals who benefit most, and he analyzes the test, confidentially of course, but he analyzes the test. Individuals who benefit most from the study are once introduced a lot of insight words, or insight phrases, meaning by the third day, they are all writing "now I see that" or "I understand that" or "it just dawned on me that" or "I realize that". Those who have many of these words or phrases in their writings are the ones who benefited the most. In other words, they've

created a sense of coherence out of the experience. They make sense out of something perhaps before that was senseless. In other words, they created a story around their experiences. It's no longer dispersed, disjointed, disconnected data. Now it is a coherent whole. It's a story. Now I can deal with it. And if you think about it, what do people mostly remember? People mostly remember stories. Why? Because you remember a story, because it's one unit- it's a whole. If I give you now a collection of, you know, 100 random words, it'll take you a very long time to commit to memory. I mean we all know, we all took the SATs. But if I tell you a story, you are much more likely to remember it. Maybe not word for word, but certainly, the general ideas. Because we can hold it, we can grasp it. Because it has a sense of coherence. I can deal with it. I can handle it, as opposed to some dispersed ideas, disjointed words. The exact same here. We want to feel that our lives

have a sense of coherence that we can make sense of them. Pennebaker: "An artifact of our ambiguous and unpredictable world is the anxiety of not attaining completion and not understanding a simple cause-and-effect explanation for traumatic disturbances.

Alas, we naturally search for meaning and the completion of events; it gives us a sense of control and predictability over our lives." Again, that's why therapy helps, because we create coherence out of experience. This is why there was far less post-traumatic stress disorder after the Holocaust after there was the Vietnam War. Because after the Holocaust, they spoke about these experiences. They created a story around it, a tragic one, but still there was a sense of coherence, as opposed to Vietnam where there was just random flashes of experiences without giving themselves permission, or without society, in many ways, giving them the permission to open up and to create a story out of it that they could hand, they could grasp.

The work of Pennebaker to a great extent relies on the work of a psychologist who we mentioned on the very first day of class. And that is Aaron Antonovsky. Aaron

Antonovsky whom I consider to be one of the fathers of positive psychology, if you remember, came up with the notion of "salutogenesis", an alternative to the pathogenic model- pathogenic model, the model that focuses on pathology, on sickness, on illness, where what Antonovsky said is we need to focus on the origins of health. Salute- health; genesis- origin. And what he did specifically was the following. So he was a sociologist and he said the following- he said: look, life is tough. People go through hardship. They go through difficulties- whether we like it or not, we all in life encountered hardships. In relationship, in school, at work- whatever, whichever domain, there are hardships, there are difficulties. Life is hard. Period. We know that. However, there are some people who are able to better deal with the hardship, with the difficulties, who still, despite- they don't do away these hardships- despite these hardships and difficulties are still able to lead a full, fulfilling and overall, happy life not the constant high- that's reserved for psychopaths and dead people. With the same ups and downs, but at a higher level of wellbeing, or of a lower level of anxiety. And he said we need to study those. We shouldn't just study the sick people, whether the sick people who are physically ill- which is mostly the pathogenic model of medicine, or the people who are unwell psychologically- schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety as psychology have mostly studied. He said we need to look at the healthy people and study them, which is exactly the model that led to asking the question in 1980s with at-risk population: "What makes some individuals succeed despite unfavorable circumstances?" It was his question that made all the difference. So he did the same in his research and asked about the general population: "Who are the people who are healthy? And what is the origin of that health? What distinguishes them from other people?"

And he came up with the notion of the sense of coherence that people have the sense of coherence about their lives. What that means is that, he said it has three components that he researched and identified. The first component: sense of

comprehensibility- I understand the world. It makes sense to me. I see. I realize. I get it. The world and event, difficulties and hardships, highs and lows make sense to me mostly. Second, sense of manageability. I can deal with it. I can handle it. I have the internal as well as external resources to deal with it as opposed to being helpless. This is a sense of efficacy, of confidence- being able to deal with the hardships that arise. So that's the second component. The third and the final component that makes up the sense of coherence, according to Antonovsky, is a sense of meaningfulness. This was not in vain- this difficulty. This disagreement with my partner was not for nothing, because we understand one another better now. And we are even close, more intimate. This failure was not in vain. I have learned from it. And I have grown from it. This mistake has reason- again, not necessarily happen for the best, but learning how to make the best of what happens. These three components are what he identified and replicated in later research as the source of mental health. To quote Pennebaker- to quote Antonovsky, a sense of coherence: "A global orientation that expresses the external- the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable (comprehensible, in other words); (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli (internal resources and external resources: I can deal with it, I can manage); and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement (it's meaningful)."

Look at these three. For all those who write a journal, I bet you can identify these three in your writings. This is what a journal does to a great extent. When we write and when we really write about our experiences, our difficult experiences, this is very often what comes up - have sense of coherence. I see. I understand. Make sense. I can deal with it. I can handle it. I have just found a path of how to do it. Even if dealing with it and handling it is writing a journal, and finally, it makes sense to me. It's meaningful to me now, whereas before, it didn't as much. So if you don't have a

journal, you don't journal, it is certainly something that I highly, highly recommend.

Let me summarize the whole change lecture: the A, B and C. The three are interconnected. In fact, if we want real change to come about, they have to be interconnected. Why? Because habit is like a flood. And it's not enough if we just create a small? Cranny trying to create a new habit. Because flood would wash it away. What we need is the A, the B and the C. Implement these changes in our lives. And they are interconnected. So let me give you an example. Let's say someone who has low self-esteem. Low self-esteem, the C- cognition: they don't think highly of themselves. Poor self evaluation. When you don't think highly of yourself, you are more likely to be innervated, to feel down, not to be motivated, and as a result of that, that is the Affect, the emotion that you experience- not good feelings; as a result of that, we are much more likely to do nothing- in other words, the B is do nothing. Now through self-perception theory, the behavior then affects my cognition on doing nothing: I'm not dealing. I'm not coping. I'm avoiding. And that

lowers my self esteem, even more my evaluation of myself, the C. And that leads to even worse emotions and so on and so on and so on, in a downward spiral, until in some cases, we reach resignation, or in Martin Seligman's words, learned helplessness. Now think of someone who has high self-esteem, high level of self-confidence. I believe in myself.

I think I can do well. That leads to high level of motivation.

Remember what Marva Collins does? The model that we talked about under belief, self-fulfilling prophecies- that leads to high levels of motivations, strong emotions. I'm energized. And that in turn leads to more action- the B, the behaviors. Because I act more, I do more, I cope more. I put myself on the line more. I'm much more likely to have more positive evaluation of myself, which leads to more positive emotions and on and on and on, in an upward spiral. The spiral that Barbara Fredrickson talks about in the Broaden-and-build, the spiral that Bandura talks about when he discusses

self-efficacy. When we intervene, it's important to introduce, if possible, all three. And we can start anywhere. So let's take an example- someone with social phobia, someone who is afraid to be out there, in front of people. One way to deal with it- let's begin with the A, the Affect, the emotion. One way to deal with it is through medication that goes directly to our emotions. Another way of dealing with it is meditation, which also affects our emotions directly. Some people benefit more from one, or from the other- depends on how extreme the situation is. But that's the A, the Affect. One way of dealing with it, behavior, is through what's called in cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure which is gradual exposure to stimuli that create that phobia. So initially I'll walk, you know, 10 yards out of my home. Initially exposure through the imagination and I include it under behavior, because the mind does know the difference between the imaginary and the real. So gradually being exposed to it. Over time being exposed more and more, until I can go out to a mall and not experience the same anxiety that I did a year ago. So that's through behavior. Very effective- the exposure technique. And finally, you can also intervene through cognition in therapy, in dealing with irrational thoughts, psychological traps, the three M's- "Am I magnifying? The extent. Am I minimizing something? For example, my successes in working with people. Or am I making up? Imaginary scenarios. My catastrophizing events when I can have a more realistic view." So that's my thinking about it, the cognition. Let me show you a personal example of something that I dealt with So as you know, born through genes- high levels of anxiety.

Very prone to it. Startle very easily- still, less today, but still to some extent today. Used to get very nervous in squash matches. Used to choke often, when I was playing important games. And that's something that in front of, speaking in front of an audience, got very nervous and anxious. And this is something that I decided that I really wanted to deal with. More than any other things that I was facing. The thing anxiety. So what did I do? Let me begin first with the C, Cognition. What I did- I

analyzed the situation in my journal. I used the Bureau of Study Counsel. I learned and studied about the three M's, the irrational thoughts- magnifying, minimizing, making up, catastrophizing. And through cognition, it helped a lot. That wasn't enough. After the C, I went to the A, the Affect.

And the Affect was for me physical exercise. You know, even today, this morning, at home, I ran. I exercise because it significantly lowers anyone's levels of anxiety. And I can tell a significant difference in my talks if I don't exercise. So even three or four weeks ago, David, my son was unwell and I had to take him to the doctor first thing Tuesday morning. Didn't have time to exercise. Actually felt it in the lecture. I was more nervous, more anxious. Makes a big difference. As we'll talk about, after break, it literally has the same effect as taking an anti-anxiety pill. So exercise was certainly there, work directly on my emotion. Yoga. Helped me tremendously in dealing with anxiety and lowering that level. So this was the emotional.

The other thing, music. Relaxing music. You know my taste in music. I don't need to repeat it again. So actually when Tammy and I got married, we moved in together. She couldn't believe my collection of CDs. She said "you don't look that anxious". Because I had, um, "The Most Relaxing Classical Music in the World", "Music for Relaxation", "Music for Dealing with Anxiety", silent quiet music- I mean, a whole shelf of the relax... But they relax me! They really help me.

And finally, behavior. Introducing behavior. So it is through exposure. Initially giving a talk. Because I want to be a teacher. Giving a talk to my squash team. Giving a talk to my family. Places that were safe for me. Giving a talk to anyone who would listen. Initially small groups and gradually building it up. Exposure through the imagination. Once again, the imaginary thing and over time becoming more confident. Another thing that for me was very significant as an undergrad here- speaking up in section. I was terrified of speaking up. And when I decided to do that, I

had no doubt in my mind that everyone in section could hear my heart beat. Because it was in my head. And yet, gradually, I spoke up a little bit more and a little bit more, and then through self-perception theory, it actually got better and better and better. And I still do all these things. I still do yoga. I still do exercise regularly. I still engage in the CBT approach, the 3 M's. I keep a journal, which combines very often all three. And I listen to relaxing music. And it works. It works. Now change is not easy. It is hard. It takes time. However, that doesn't mean that the process itself cannot be enjoyable. It's not OK when I've changed then I'll be happy. The process itself is extremely, potentially, extremely rewarding. Sometimes difficult. Potentially, very rewarding. The journey as well as the destination. The other important thing to remember about change- this is taken from the work of, really the person who took the psycho-analysis and transformed it into a more positive approach.

Karen Horney, who I mentioned before. What she says about neurosis is that neurosis never go away completely. And when she says neurosis, she means it in the most, in the broadest sense. So for example, if I am a perfectionist, I'll always have some perfectionism in me. And we'll talk about it after the break. If I am prone to anxiety, I'll never be, you know, the Dalai Lama, unlikely. It'll always be there. And it'll always be potentially triggered by any event. And she says "that's OK. That's natural. That's human." And we need to accept it. Because if we don't accept it, then we'll be constantly frustrated. Because we want to change completely, or expect our partner to change completely. Very difficult. Unrealistic. It takes time. It's gradual. We need to also learn. And we can learn to enjoy the process. Henry David Thoreau, 1840s: "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. ||

It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very

atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts." Again, it's the process; it's not the outcome that matters more. The outcome will lead to a spike but will very quickly go back to our base level. It's the process of actually doing those activities, the ant he Bs, and the Cs that will lead to a happier- not perfect, not happiest, but happier life. Over time, It takes time to carve out live statue, chipping away the excess stone, the limitations and building a beautiful life. It is not only the highest of art, it is also- I would argue a high science. And that is the science of psychology.

I want to move on now. Move on and talk about... One second. Here we go. I want to talk about a topic that is related to, very much related to the whole change, to the whole change process. And that is goal setting. Now, question for you: how many people here- put your hand up if this applies to you- do you want to become more efficient and procrastinate less? If it's true for you, put your hand up. One, two, three, four, five, six...OK. Put your hand up now if you want to experience less stress and be calmer, whether it's during an exam period or not. OK. One, two...OK. Now if you put your hand up for one of these questions, you should stay. If you put up your hand for both questions, you should not only stay, you should stay awake. Because what we are going to talk about of the next two classes is the importance of goals and how they can help us deal with stress, how they can help us deal with procrastination, how we can become more efficient- not perfectly so.

By the end of the two weeks, you are not going to a well-oiled machine. You are just going to be a happier human being- just think is a lot. So first of all, the topic that we'll talk about under goal setting- first, understand the theory and the practice of goal setting: the Ivory tower and the Main Street of it; second, how do we deal with stress- we'll talk about this in the next class; and finally, I don't think we have time for this, but I'm still leaving up the power points there just so you can look at it, and I

elaborate on it in the book. Moving from material perception to happiness perception, which is essentially about what I talked about in the last meditation of the book, The Happiness Revolution and the internal revolution that can take place. I know you don't have time for before break, but you still have the material on it. So let's begin with theory and practice. What I want to do now is convince you, very simply, to set goals, convince you that it is important and yet you are going to do it for, your response papers. You have already started doing it, but I really want to convince you, as a way of life, setting goals regularly, whether it's in business, whether in your personal life. First, I'm going to do it by convince, showing you the research on setting goals and performance and second, setting goals and happiness- how it contribute to our success in the conventional. Currency, as well as in the ultimate currency. Quite simply, people who set goals are generally, controlling for other things, more successful. Why? One of the main reasons is because what goals do is they focus us. Very often, we are all over the place; we are not sure where we are going. And if we don't know where we are going, we are unlikely to get there. And the focus gets us directed. It brings forth resources- external and internal resources- that are necessary to get there. Abraham Maslow: "Being focused on a task produces organization for efficiency both within the organism and in the environment." Quite remarkable how goals actually work. When we set goals, when we enter something, whether it's privately but even better- publicly, things begin to happen inside us as well as around us. Also, goals contribute to performance and well-being because they strengthen our resilience. Remember the second class when we talked about resilience? One of the things that extinguish those kids who were successful, despite difficult external circumstances, was the fact that they were resilient, and one of the distinguishing characteristics was they set goals for themselves. They were future-oriented. Not only thinking about the past, being "learned helpless"- learning to be helpless, but focusing on the future.

Nietzsche once wrote that if we have a what for, every how becomes possible. When we have the what for, every how becomes possible. And we are much more likely to overcome difficulties and hardships, if we have a goal, a mission, something that we care about, something that we want to attain. Goals make us more successful for the exact same reason that positive beliefs do. What we are doing with goals with declaring that we believe we are going to get something. Roger Bannister declared, said that he would break the 4 minute barrier. Thomas Edison said that by the 31 of December, 1879, he would generate light from electricity. Setting goals makes it more likely to come true. Because our mind does not like when the reason inconsistency between what is inside and what is outside. It wants there to be match. And if I believe in a goal and I declare a goal, the outside is likely to match that. Again, not 100 percent correlation as we've discussed, but certainly making it much more likely to happen, making us much more likely to be successful.

Now what is the knapsack? Imagine the following: you go on a road trip. And you have a knapsack on your back. And you reach a wall, a barrier. What do you do? Well, there are many things that you can do when you reach that wall. And the wall is long and high. One way is to say, "OK, pity" and turn around. In other words, avoid that wall. Another thing we can do is take out our sledgehammer and try to break it down. Another thing that we can do before we do any of the

other things is take our knapsack and throw it over the wall. Take our knapsack and simply throw it over the wall. Why? Because the necessity is the mother of inventions. I need my knapsack to continue. I need my knapsack. I want it. And now it's over the wall. I have no choice. But to get over that wall, whether it's by breaking it down, whether it's by finding a way around it, under it or over it. But suddenly, I will come up with solutions that I have not seen before and this is how it works. It's remarkable- how it works- for the exact same reason that when you declare a goal such as "I want to buy a computer". Suddenly you see computer ads all around you, whereas before you didn't see

computer ads. Or let's say you want to buy specific car. Suddenly you see that specific car all around you while you didn't see it before. Why? Because we co-create our reality through our questions to a great extent. Remember the children on the bus were there all along, but you didn't see them until I presented a goal to you which was to count the number of children on the bus And then suddenly it was so clear that it was right in front your eyes. Before, they didn't exist for you. That's what a goal does. If I declare that I have to get over the wall, and my question is "how do I get over this wall". It's not thinking about "is it possible or is it not possible". It's rather "how can I get over this wall". This question opens up opportunities, many of which I have not seen before. Suddenly the children on the bus are right in front of me. Suddenly a hole in the wall is right in front of me. Suddenly I see a sledgehammer that I didn't see before, right next to me. Necessity is the mother of inventions. If we ask the right questions, it opens up opportunities.

The other thing that's at work here is the power of the word: words create worlds. Let there be light. We've seen it in religion. And there was light. Words create the world. Book of John: in the beginning was the word. But it's not just in religion. Look at this great country. The United States was declared into existence. Words have power. They have meaning, especially when the words are meaningful to us when the goals that we declare are meaningful to us, they are much more likely to come true. The connection between concept and conceive is not just etymological, it is also metaphysical. It is also real. Because when we declare something, when we save something, it is much more likely to become a reality. What words do is essentially create an image in our minds, especially when we imagine the goal. It creates an image in our mind and the mind doesn't know the difference between the imaginary and the real. And the mind wants consistency- that is what goals do. They help us create consistency. I want to read you an excerpt that, I talk about many of these things in the book so for some of you, this may be a repetition.

But I want to read you an excerpt from W. H. Murray, who led the Scottish expedition to the Himalayas, one of those prominent, accomplished climbers of all time, climbed the Everest. Here's what he says, in his writing about the expeditions that he took: "Concerning all acts of creation there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: That the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. ||

All sorts of things occur to help one that would not have otherwise occurred. A whole stream of

events issues from the decision, and meetings and material assistance which no man would have dreamed would come his way. 'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it!' Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it." Why it works, how it works- we are not really sure, but it works. Just like when you declare you are looking for computer, suddenly you see all these opportunities, the same with commitments. When we commit, things begin to happen. We begin to identify external resources as well as internal resources. Things that we didn't see before. Because my question becomes "how can I succeed". And then children on the bus or the time on the clock suddenly become visible to us. And we are able to succeed... Much more likely to succeed than before. Words create worlds. So this is about success. Very well documented. Some of your readings are related to this. People who set goals generally, controlling from other factors, are more successful, whether it's in business, whether it's in other personal lives. Goals matter. They don't just matter though for the "hard currency". They also matter for the "ultimate currency"- the currency of happiness. Goals properly understood, goals properly understood, lead to happiness. And I emphasize "properly understood". Why? Because we know that attaining goals, the attainment of goals does not in and of itself lead to happiness. Yes, getting tenure will lead to a spike of my well being, but very quickly I'll go back to my base level. Winning a lottery or making a lot of money, or getting a, or getting promoted at work will lead to a spike in my well being but it will not lead to long

lasting happiness. So that's temporary- we know that. So we know that attainment of goals does not lead to happiness. What does lead to happiness? Understanding the proper role of goals. And understanding that it's not the attaining of a goal that leads to happiness, but the having of a goal that leads to happiness.

So two years ago, when I taught positive psychology, a book came out by very important scholar in the area of happiness, who's the Dalai Lama's right hand man. He's translator, Ricardo Mathieu. Wonderful book on happiness came out. And we, in Williams James Hall 1, engaged in a debate- was an event for Harvard students and faculty. And we engaged in a debate- "Happiness: East and West". And we agreed on many things- as you know, I meditate regularly, and certainly believe in the power of a lot of the Buddhist psychology. However, the one thing that we disagreed on was goals. That's the one thing we disagree. Because in Buddhism, according to many of the interpretations- not all, many of the interpretations, the state we want to reach is a state of non-attachment. A state where we will not have something external that we want, that we desire, that we will be completely present in the here and now. Now I think it's a wonderful ideal perhaps, but what I argued and what I still argue is that it's unrealistic As human beings, I do not believe- maybe after 30 years of meditating for

8 hours a day, possible- but I do not believe that we can reach a state where we are not attached. And setting goals is an example of attachment. Because when I say I want to win this championship or I want to get a job in this bank, this is a goal which means by definition that I'm attached to the outcome. If I wasn't attached, if I didn't care then, it wouldn't matter. And I think it's not only important for success, it is also important for happiness. So that's where I differ to a great extent from some of the Buddhist interpretations on non-attachment of being in a desire-less state. However, where we are similar in our

understanding is the focus on the present. Goals properly understood their role is to liberate us to enjoy the present. What does this mean? Let's say you go off on a road trip. And you have no idea where

you are going. You don't have a goal. You don't have a destination in mind. You are less likely rather than more likely, less likely to enjoy the journey. Because every minute you'll look left or right or ahead to see if you are not falling over the stage; whereas if you know where you are going, you have a sense of direction. You are liberated. You are much more likely to enjoy the process, the flower on the side as well.

Think about your lives- periods that you have no idea, or for many of you, I know, it's happening right now. You have no idea where you are going next year. Now for a while, for most people, it's OK. It's fine. But after a while, you want to know where you are going. Because when you are immersed in something, you have a clearer sense of direction. You are much more likely to be happy, which explains why so many people, when they retire, become less happy, even though they've been dreaming of being retired for many years. When they actually retire, they become less happy. The ones who are happier when they retire are the ones who actually set goals for themselves, whether it's taking a class, whether it's learning something new, whether it's spending more time with family and friends, but they have a goal, as opposed to "let's just enjoy ourselves; let's just be". We need that goal- this outcome, this future orientation, so that we can enjoy the present more. The goals liberate us to enjoy the here and now. In other words, if you think about it, the role of goals is actually means. They are means toward an end, and the end are the present experiences. Again, the goals in themselves, as we said, as we discussed, will not make us happier, whether attaining of the goal or failing to attain the goal. We'll be on the ups and downs, the vicissitudes. But if we want the base level- the base level is the here and now. The present. It's the process. It's the journey that we're living mostly, not the outcome.

When I start the book, I talk about thinking this rally championship would make me

happy And it did. For 4 hours .And then back again to base level. Professors who get tenures think that is what would make them happy for the rest of their lives- the attainment of that goal. It doesn't. They go back to base level of happiness, whether they get it, or don't get it. The key is to learn, to enjoy the process. And one of the roles of the goals is to liberate us so that we can enjoy the process. Goals are means toward the present end, which is taking a lot of goal theory and turning it around. This explains why so many high achievers are unhappy. This explains why so many high achievers turn to drugs and to alcohol. By the way, today even more so than in the past- maybe today we know about it more than in the past. Going into rehab centers constantly. Coming out and going back. And we ask ourselves, "why? How could it be?" Those people who seemingly have it all. Who seemingly have it all? Fame. Fortune. Beauty. Anyone they want. The life that most people in the world dream about. How come they end up in a rehab center? How come they are unhappy?

Here's the how come. You see, for years, when they climb up the ranks, when they have the dream of becoming a famous person, a person who is admired, revered, a person who can get anything or anyone almost they want, when they dream about it, they may be unhappy. But they say to themselves, "OK. I'm unhappy now, but I'll be happy when I get there." And then they get there. And they realize that there's no "there" there. They think it would make them happy, but it doesn't. And that's when the real problems begin. Because that's when they begin to experience helplessness. That's when they become resigned. That's when they go into- on the Hamburger model, that's when they go into the learned helplessness and resignation and the nihilism. Because everyone has told them that once they make it then they'll be happy. And they told themselves, "once I make it then I'll be happy". And they are not any happier for it. Yeah, initially when the fame begins, and when they start having things in their way as they always dream, of course they are happier. But then they go back to their base level. And when they go to their base level, they are suppressed, they are

upset, they are disappointed, and more than anything, they are scared. Because what now? Until that point, they were sustained by their hope that when they get there, they'll be happy, but they are not happier. And they are scared. And they are lost. And they look for solutions, very often outside of the normal experiences, outside of ordinary life. And where is that? That very often is with drugs and with alcohol. Because that takes us out of our normal day-to-day, ordinary lives. For good and ill. This misunderstanding prevalent and most people live that way. And they think- and this is why so many people go through mid-life crisis for example.

It's not the only reason. But it's one of the reasons. Because there are many people who are pretty accomplished, who have nailed it, and then they say, "What now? Is this all the raise to it?" Yes, this is all the raise to it. And the challenge is to identify the treasure of happiness that are embedded, that are there in the it and that are there all around us. Again, happiness is not contingent on our status or the state of our bank account. It's contingent on our state of mind, of how we interpret our reality, of on what we choose to focus on. And to be happier is the present that matters much more. Quote from my book: "Happiness is not about making it to the peak of the mountain, nor is it about climbing aimlessly around the mountain; happiness is the experience of climbing toward the peak." It is about having a goal. It is about having a destination in mind, and then letting go and enjoying the process. You know there are many people who talk to me about it, and again I went through the exact same experience. So OK "what is going to be the next job that I take?" "What is going to be the path that I take?" And once they take a path, it is very often they regret, "I should've taken the other path." Should've taken this job. Should've gone there. And my response to it is it doesn't matter. It doesn't, in the ultimate currency, it doesn't matter. Because, yeah, let's say I am at a job that I should have taken and I would be very successful there. Fine. I would enjoy a high when I became very successful. But that in and of itself would not make me happy. The key is to have the goal. The key is to have the

commitment to whatever it is that I'm doing. Now that commitment may change every three days and that's OK. It's the having the goals. Having that commitment that matters. So if you chose

certain path and now you regret it, remember, it really doesn't matter. You can be as happy in both paths as long as you are committed. Because when we are committed, that's when we can enjoy the journey. Doesn't matter as much what it is that we are committed to, provided of course that is moral and it's not about hurting others, which ultimately doesn't just hurt others- it also hurts ourselves.

David Watson in "The Handbook of Positive Psychology": "Contemporary researchers emphasize that it is the process of striving after goals— rather than goal attainment per se— that is crucial for happiness and positive affectivity." And finally, two of the leading researchers in the field, David Myers and Ed Diener: "Happiness grows less from the passive experience of desirable circumstances than from involvement in valued activities and progress toward one goal." Here is a beautiful poem that I think captures by Gwendolyn Brooks: "Live not for battles won / Live not for the-end-of-the-song / Live for the along." It's not any goals that matter. It's not any

goals that...Not all goals are created equal. And here's what we do get to a place where it's important to think about your goals. Yes, the commitment is the most important, but there are certain goals that are better than others: self-concordant goals, very briefly, because -it's in your readings- are essentially goals that are aligned with your personal interests and values- things that you care about. Doing things that are important to you. So for example, doing premed because what you really really want to be is a doctor and treat people. Studying economics because the market fascinates you. And you want to engage in work that relates to it. You are passionate about it. Joining a student organization, because you believe in their mission. Aligned with your personal interests, with your values, with your passion. These are goals that you choose freely, not goals that are imposed from the outside whether it's by someone specific or specific people, or by abstract society. And doing it out of a sense of

obligation or duty. It's to do things that you care about deeply from within. In other words, these are things that you want to do, or that you feel, that you perceive that you want to do, rather than things that you have to do.

My teacher Ohad Kamin, when I graduated from college, and I was debating- I didn't know which direction to go, said to me the following- he said: "here is the advice from a 50 year old." - He was 50 at the time. He said, "Identify the things that you can do. And then out of those, identify the things that you want to do. And list them down. Make a list- long or short, whatever it is. Now out of the things you want to do, identify those things that you really want to do. And then look at them, and out of those things, identify those that you really really want to do and then do them."

One of the best advices that I got. Very simple. But so important. Again it's to take time aside and to think about those things. So what are my self-concordant goals? What is the interest of me? What is valuable to me? What am I passionate about? What do I want to rather than feel that I have to do? And sometimes the answers are not easy answers. Sometimes the answers are not answers that I want to hear. And the implications, the? That are following that path

may not be as pleasant initially, because it made me going against the grain. It made me doing something that yields difficulties from other people or from the environment. It may not be the most popular choice.

I think it's such an important component of happiness, is spirituality. Now the dictionary definition of spirituality is- one of the definitions is the real sense of significance of something. So if I see something as significant, as important, as meaningful, I'm having a spiritual experience engaging in it. So what is significant to me? What is important to me? And the thing to keep in mind is that it doesn't matter what I choose, what direction I go in. If I choose something that is self-concordant, that is aligned with my personal goals and mission, I will lead a spiritual life. In fact,

an investment banker who goes into investment banking for the right reasons, because he/she cares about this work. Because they think it's important, because they enjoy it. Because they love dealing with numbers and having the adrenaline rush. And yes, they are people who truly enjoy it. If they go in for the right reasons, they will lead a much more spiritual life than a monk who goes into the order for the wrong reasons.

And of course, vice versa. Whatever we choose, the self-concordant goals- and I truly believe it, that the world will become a better place, not just individualized will become a better place, if people pursue their passions, their self-concordant goals. Easier said than done. "Becoming self concordant is a difficult skill, requiring both accurate self-perceptual abilities and the ability to resist social pressures that may sometimes push one in inappropriate directions." And we need to engage in these activities. Why? Because life is short. Life is short. Life is...Sorry. "Life is too short to do what I have to do; The sooner we start on the want-to, the better. This does not mean that you can't say to yourself like, "well my real passion is starting my own business. And in order to get the foundation, I will work as a consultant or an investment banker for two years." Nothing wrong with that. Perfectly fine. Even though it's not your passion working 80 hours a week in front of an Excel sheet. That's OK. Sometimes we need to delay gratification. The danger is that we enter this delayed gratification state for our entire lives. And that becomes the red-race (?) path. And that is what we need to be aware of. This is what we need to keep in back of our mind. I want to show you a quick video excerpt from one of my favorite movies, Dead Poet Society, where Robin Williams talks about the importance of identifying what it is that we were meant to do with our lives, in other words, our self-concordant goals. (Video clips from Dead Poet Society with captions on the screen) Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar: So carpe diem (seize the day). Do what you want.

To Be Continued