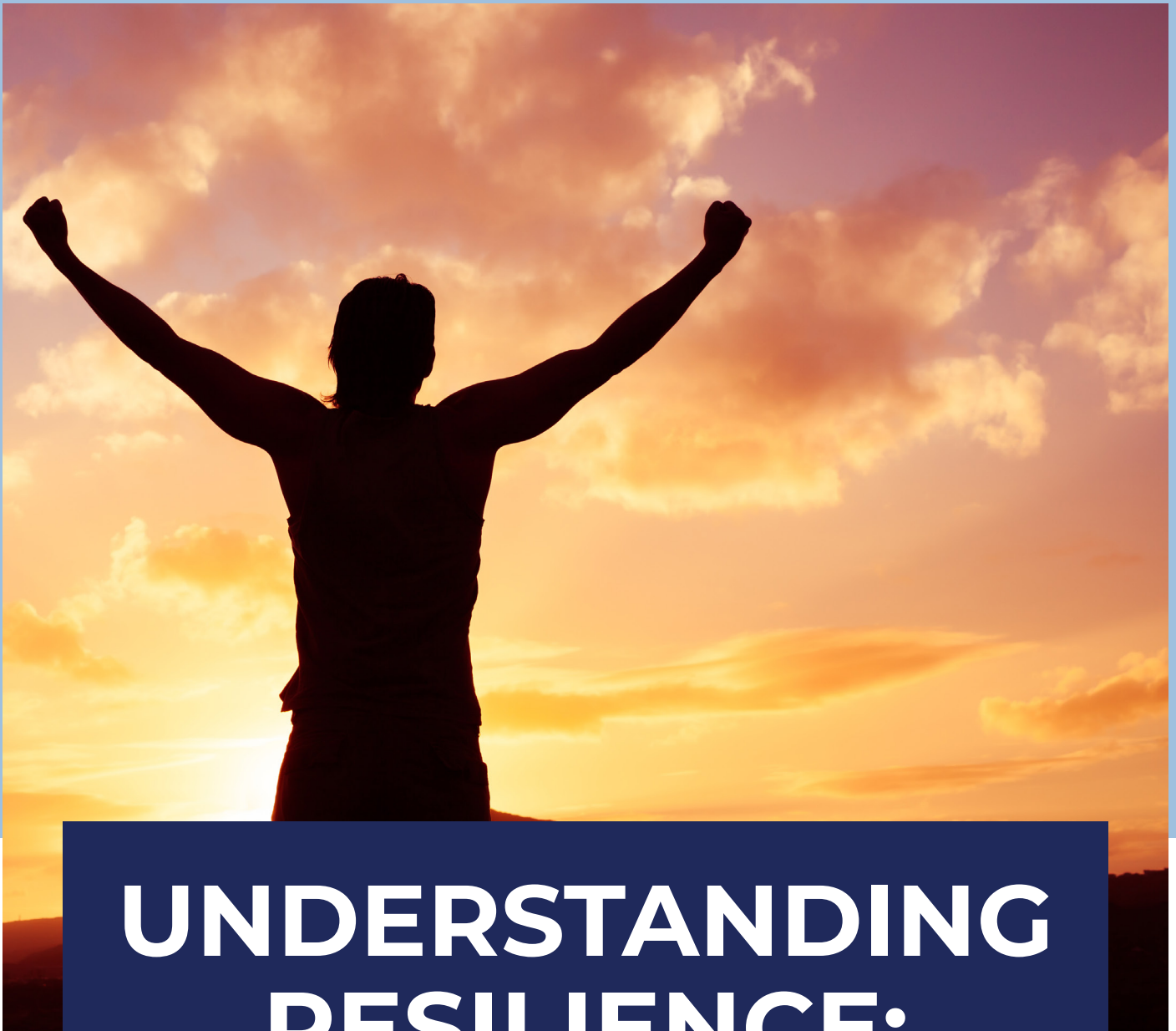




UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE:

**NEW WAYS TO BUILD
EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, &
PSYCHOLOGICAL
TOUGHNESS**



Introduction

It can sometimes be difficult to accept that there will be various points throughout our lives when we will be faced with challenges and adversity or fall short of a certain standard we hold for ourselves. Whether in a professional setting, in school, in relationships, or while going through life transitions, we may experience a wide range of negative or overwhelming feelings that are natural and valid in difficult or uncomfortable circumstances, but with the right tools, it is possible to persevere, combat the negativity, and realize significant personal growth.

Resilience training offers the potential for people from a wide range of backgrounds, professions, and stages of life to develop skills that promote emotional, mental, and psychological toughness. The process of building resilience involves courage, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, hope, putting things in perspective, envisioning the future, and finding your purpose. By recognizing and utilizing your unique, core strengths, you can work to develop a healthy mindset that can guide you through opportunities to increase productivity, perseverance, happiness, optimism, meaningful connections, and overall well-being. Our hope is that reading this eBook will be a useful first step in your journey towards becoming more resourceful and resilient in all domains of life.

“The process of building resilience involves courage, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, hope, putting things in perspective, envisioning the future, and finding your purpose.”



Chapter 1:

WHAT IS WELL-BEING?

Dr. Martin Seligman, a psychologist at University of Pennsylvania, and one of the founders of the Positive Psychology movement developed a theory of well-being known as PERMA. This theory should be viewed as a general description of the common elements of well-being in human functioning. However, every individual is unique and experiences happiness in different ways. There are many different paths to a thriving life. Therefore the various components of PERMA are not universally experienced in the same way for every individual and therefore different people benefit from them in different ways.

Here are brief definitions of the five components of PERMA:

1

POSITIVE EMOTION:

By learning how to magnify the intensity and duration of your pleasures you can increase good feelings. There is a genetic set range for positive emotions, but people can learn skills to live in the top part of this range. Fortunately, this appears to be the least crucial aspect of happiness.

2

ENGAGEMENT:

This is achieved by becoming absorbed and immersed in your work, love, friendship and leisure. When achieving a state of total absorption it produces a state known as "flow" that is so gratifying that people will pursue the activity for its own sake rather than the reward. People often describe this experience as their concentration being completely focused on the moment to the point where it feels like "time stops." The key to having more engagement is to identify your strengths, set a clear goal that is sufficiently challenging and on which you can get immediate feedback on your progress, and develop a plan for implementing them into your life.

3

RELATIONSHIPS:

Perhaps the most crucial component for achieving well-being is developing quality relationships. Shared experiences with others can often accentuate the experiences that contribute to well-being and can infuse life with meaning. Moreover, connections with people may help to alleviate negative feelings and produce positive emotions.

4

MEANING:

This involves going beyond the self, by using your strengths to belong to and serve something that you believe is larger than yourself. There are various avenues for how people find their meaning including religion, spirituality, family, politics, organizations, community institutions, and social causes, as a few examples.

5

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

When people pursue mastery for its own sake, this can contribute to increased well-being. Interestingly, even when this pursuit does not produce positive emotion, people motivated by accomplishment will feel motivated to pursue their goals for the sense of achievement alone.





Chapter 2:

CAN I BE HAPPIER?

You may have wondered about whether or not it is truly possible to increase your level of happiness, and if it is, how do you go about doing this? Research has demonstrated that approximately half of your happiness is genetically determined and each person has a set range to which they will ultimately return no matter what occurs in their lives. However, the good news is that inherited personality traits are changeable and a major portion of a person's happiness is determined by factors that are under voluntary control.

Therefore, if a person makes a conscious effort to be happy, they have the power to live in the upper portion of their set range. This provides us with a great deal of hope for being able to raise our levels of happiness and suggests that it is worthwhile to explore and pursue methods for increasing happiness. In fact, Positive Psychology researchers have demonstrated

that after engaging in a Happiness Building Exercise, 94% of participants had a decrease in depression (some greater than a 50% reduction) and 92% increased their happiness.

Most of us have some notions about what we believe are the essential components of being happy. There has been a great deal of research done in this area, some of which you may have anticipated, but some of which may surprise you. First, it is important to understand that you will not experience more positive emotions in your life by simply experiencing less negative emotions. Even if you experience negative emotion you can still have positive feelings in your life and vice versa. Therefore, the goal of Positive Living is not simply to remove negativity from your life but to actually increase the amount of positive emotions that you experience.

Research has shown that the most important component for achieving happiness is achieving a sense of connection with others. People tend to feel happier when they're with other people, across almost all situations. Therefore, many of the Positive Living activities are designed to increase your ability to develop closer, more effective and more satisfying relationships. Along these lines, research has also indicated that people who are married tend to be happier. It is unclear whether or not happy people tend to seek out marriage or if marriage causes people to be happier, but it seems apparent that if you are married, you are more likely to report higher levels of happiness.

Of course, a key element of being able to derive happiness from life is the perspective one assumes. In other words, life most often tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we seek out positive then we are more likely to experience positive, and if we seek negative it is more likely that this will be present in our lives. Our perspective of our wants, needs and expectations are typically shaped by the social structure around us. For example, if people in your neighborhood live in million dollar homes then you are more likely to feel inferior if your house is worth half a million dollars.

Research suggests that money has very little impact on happiness. The richest Americans tend to be only slightly happier than the average person in this country. Apparently, only a requisite amount of money that allows a person to be able to tend to their basic needs is required for happiness, but the pursuit of money as a goal in itself does not lead to happiness. If you answered "no" to many or most of the questions above, you may consider relationship counseling as a way to gain a deeper understanding of the core issues interfering with a healthy dynamic. Counseling can also provide support and suggestions for techniques that could be used to either end the relationship or shift it into a more positive, gratifying place.

Some other key aspects of life that people generally think are related to happiness are health, age, education, climate, race, gender and religion:

- * Despite the common perception that youth produces happiness, life satisfaction as a whole goes up with age. As people get older they tend to have a smaller range of emotion and therefore experience less highs and lows.
- * Another surprising finding is that physical health has very little correlation with happiness. What is most important in terms of health is our perception of and ability to cope with our physical condition, rather than our actual level of health.
- * Women tend to experience both positive and negative emotions more strongly than men, but on average the genders do not differ greatly.
- * One very consistent finding is that religious people demonstrate more satisfaction with life than non-religious people, most likely due to the fact that it provides people with greater meaning and purpose for existence.
- * Interestingly, factors that are commonly believed to be related to happiness, such as education, climate and race do not appear to have a significant impact on positive emotion.





Chapter 3:

WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

In a world that can often be filled with negativity, it is easy to become jaded and cynical. Perhaps more than ever our society is in need of tools to help achieve happiness, fulfillment and success. In fact, people are actively pursuing many avenues to help them find reasons to be optimistic in mass numbers. In recognition of this need, the Positive Psychology movement was formed, and has grown into one of the most promising branches of psychology. It has transformed the field from focusing primarily on problems to one that explores human potential. Specifically, it involves the scientific study of the strengths, which enable individuals and groups to flourish.

The field now includes thousands of psychologists, dozens of books, and courses in prominent schools and institutions across the world. Some of the most respected psychologists in the field are involved in this movement and it is regularly featured in the most prestigious psychology journals. Positive

Psychology has also caught the attention of the popular media, demonstrating its mass appeal. Time magazine dedicated almost an entire issue to this topic. The movement has been featured in Newsweek, The Today Show, USA Today, Oprah, and various other major publications and programs.

Skeptics may wonder whether positive psychology is merely the mindless pursuit of cheerfulness that makes achieving happiness sound too simplistic. But experts in the field are quick to make it clear that they are not suggesting that fulfillment and tranquility come in a few easy steps. They argue that it takes hard work and a serious commitment to making changes in both perspective and lifestyle. As a result of the research we now have a better understanding of some of the key techniques that almost anyone can implement on a daily basis to make significant strides in achieving and maintaining a more positive existence.

In fact, Positive Psychology researchers report that **94% of people who participated in the most proven Positive Psychology techniques, had a decrease in depression (on average greater than a 50% reduction) and 92% increased their positive emotions in just 15 days.** These results are comparable to the beneficial effects of antidepressant medications and cognitive therapy.



Chapter 4:

7 KEYS TO RESILIENCE & WELL-BEING

Positive psychologists emphasize that to achieve a more optimistic outlook, a decision needs to be made to embrace the belief that happiness is to a large degree within one's control and that we all have the power to create internal joy.

Here are some practical suggestions that can be used to take initial steps towards a more positive existence:

1

Use Past Experiences Constructively:

Utilize earlier life experiences to grow in some aspect of your present life and potentially for the future. Avoid the trap of holding on to negative feelings from the past which cannot be altered.

2

Focus Energy on the Present:

Make a conscious effort to anticipate in advance any potential positive occurrences that may be present in your daily routine and be alert to unanticipated positive events. Then pay close attention to momentary pleasures and wonders and take "mental photographs" to help capture these experiences. Finally, designate time each day to reflect on the positive that exists in your life and be sure not to take anything for granted.

3

Work Towards the Future:

Dare to dream, shoot for the stars and build hope and optimism for what lies ahead. Develop a plan for the future that allows you to work towards your own personal vision of fulfillment. When you limit your fantasies you close off possibilities for growth and success.

4

Engage in Physical Activity on a Regular Basis:

Taking care of your body impacts you both physically and mentally. Shift from a “can’t do” to a “can do” attitude and focus on what you are capable of doing physically. Find ways to associate activity with something that you enjoy so you can experience immediate benefits.

5

Explore Ways of Finding Meaning:

Dedicate yourself to something you truly believe in and involves something that you think is larger than you (spirituality, charity, kindness to others). It will provide you with a sense of purpose and make life meaningful. Treat today as if it’s your last and don’t let the precious moments of life slip through your fingers.

6

Assume a “Big Picture” Perspective:

When you encounter a situation that is stressful (but not tragic) step back and ask yourself if in the larger scheme of your life this is truly important. Consider whether or not it is worth your emotional investment and with the passage of time if the situation will pass or be less critical. Keep your eye on your priorities and consider ways to use the trying circumstances as an opportunity for growth.

7

Invest in Relationships:

Positive Psychology research has demonstrated that developing close relationships is the most crucial component for achieving happiness. Invest time in developing meaningful connections with friends and family. Avoid focusing on having your needs met and focus your energy on meeting the needs of the people about whom you care most. The more you put into your relationships the more love you will receive in return. Perhaps most importantly, increased joy and positive growth produces benefits beyond simply feeling good. It’s been proven to broaden intellectual, physical and social resources. Happy people have better health habits, lower blood pressure and stronger immune systems, which ultimately lead to living longer. They also experience more satisfying relationships, higher levels of self-esteem, more effectively manage stress, a greater sense of purpose, and more clarity and optimism that they can achieve goals. Ultimately, it has the potential to create greater productivity and success and meaningfully impact almost all major domains of life.



Chapter 5:

RESILIENCE TRAINING PROGRAM

Finding meaning, happiness, and fulfillment in life is fundamental to existence, yet there are an array of challenges that can arise while in pursuit of these goals. With the positive psychology movement at its core, resilience training can be a powerful influence in helping increase optimism and perseverance to confront and overcome those challenges every step of the way. Happiness and well-being are not stagnant. Rather, with the right tools and levels of engagement, you can learn to understand your unique strengths and apply them in maximizing internal joy, personal growth, and achievement.

The resilience training program at Long Island Psychology can help participants to experience more relationship satisfaction, joy in everyday activities, confidence in their abilities, optimism about the future, productivity, and improved stress management skills, among many other benefits that create a renewed sense of purpose and a more resilient, effective approach to life as a whole. In collaboration with you, we'll design a customized resilience program to meet your specific goals and needs.

CONNECT WITH US TODAY TO GET STARTED ON BUILDING RESILIENCE SKILLS TODAY.

Call us: (516) 732-0273

Email us: info@lipsychologist.com

Visit our website: lipsychologist.com

Meet with us at either of our two offices:

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We also offer remote therapy sessions.



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