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English Composition I

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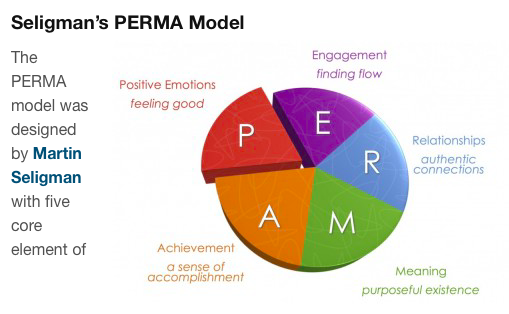
**A Way to Improve Your Well-Being: Introduction**

Did you ever feel like you are not grateful for the little things in life? You feel like you will not be completely happy until you get that car you always wanted, the career you dream of, or the just be “rich”. Studies have shown that focusing on the future too much can cause stress. It is very difficult for people to focus on the present and to appreciate what they have now. I have been doing the “Three Good Things” study for over a month to help me with this research. I believe that writing down three good things daily can increase well-being. I tested this theory out myself and I have received amazing results.

**Literature Review**

Positive Psychology has been described in many ways, but the most commonly described as “Positive Psychology is the scientific study of what makes life worth living” (Peterson, 2008)”. It is a call for psychological science and practice to be as concerned with strength as with weakness; as interested in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst; and as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling as with healing pathology. In less than a decade positive psychology caught the attention of not only the academic community but also the general public. The founding father of Positive Psychology is Martin Seligman. He is famous for his experiments and theory of learned helplessness.

Well-being is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people. There is no single definition for well-being, but there is a general agreement that well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and moods. In simpler terms, well- being can be described as judging life positively and feeling good. Well-being has five measurable elements (PERMA): Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and purpose, Accomplishments. No element defines well-being but contributes to it. Positive emotion is being able to focus on positive emotions. This is more than just smiling, it is the ability to be optimistic and view things from a positive perspective. Engagement is very important in our lives and to be able to find activities that involves full engagement helps us learn, grow, and nurture our personal happiness. Relationships are the most important aspect of people’s lives. Humans are social animals that thrives off of connection, love, intimacy, and a strong emotional and physical interaction with other humans. Meaning is having a purpose. Understanding why each of us is on earth is important to living a life of happiness and fulfillment. Accomplishments meaning having goals and ambition in life. From doing that we receive a sense of accomplishment.



Gratitude has a very different meaning within positive psychology than what it means in everyday life. Most people associate gratitude by simply saying “thank you” after you have received a gift. From a scientific perspective, gratitude is not just an action, but us is a positive emotion which is important because it serves a purpose. Harvard Medical School defined gratitude as “A thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives … As a result, gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals – whether to other people, nature, or a higher power”. The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word gratia, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness.

The “Three Good Things” was created by Martin Seligman. All he had people do was write down three things positive things every day. Research has shown that showing more gratitude can improve your well-being. In this study it showed that gratitude was improved. It was stated “Our results suggest that keeping a gratitude journal increases state gratitude; this is congruent with findings from previous studies (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Martínez-Martí et al., 2010). Others showed that it had a negative impact and did not improve well-being if they had other mental illness which the make the person look at life differently than others.

Research shows that gratitude does not improve well-being is from UC Berkeley. The article stated that “Gratitude is just a naïve form of positive thinking”. They think that when people are grateful that does not mean that they are free of negative emotions. The researcher found that gratitude can be difficult because it requires that you recognize your dependence on others and that is not always positive. Most people are better givers than receivers. I think that this does not apply to all. It depends on the person.

Research that supports my data and experiences is the “Three Good Things” research itself. Results suggest that the “Three Good Things” exercise may increase happiness and optimism. The results from my personal experience and the research is consistent with the results reported by Seligman et al (2005).

**Findings**

Doing this exercise everyday changed my perspective on life. I am happier, and I complain a lot less than what I did before. I appreciate the littler things in life and focus less on the bigger things I wish I did have. I did not stress myself out over things I could not control. I started becoming more confident than I had ever been in my life. When I stopped writing three good things down for a few days I noticed that I began to be stressed out about things again. I became doubtful about school which was my mindset before and I did not life the feeling. I began to write again, and I have made this a routine in my life.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the “Three Good Things” did improve my well-being. I feel better as the days go on and even on my bad days, I try thinking more positivity. It has helped me look at life in a positive perspective. When things do not go my way, I think that something better is coming. I have also told my friends and some family members to try this out. I have received lots of great feedback especially from my friends. They are college students like me and like most college students we are under a lot of stress. It made me feel really good that I could spread my on this and share it with others so they can improve their well-being.

Works Cited

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