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## Optimising Well-Being

Lessons from positive psychology and lifestyle medicine


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SFAMQ, Stockholm  
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## Centre for Positive Psychology and Health


The RCSI Centre for Positive Psychology and Health was established in 2019 in response to the increasing prevalence of diseases associated with lifestyle and the growing evidence of the role of psychological factors in optimising health and well-being.

The work of the Centre draws on the emerging disciplines of positive psychology, positive organisational scholarship, and lifestyle, integrative and precision medicine.


[www.rcsi.com/positivepsychology](http://www.rcsi.com/positivepsychology)




Academic programmes



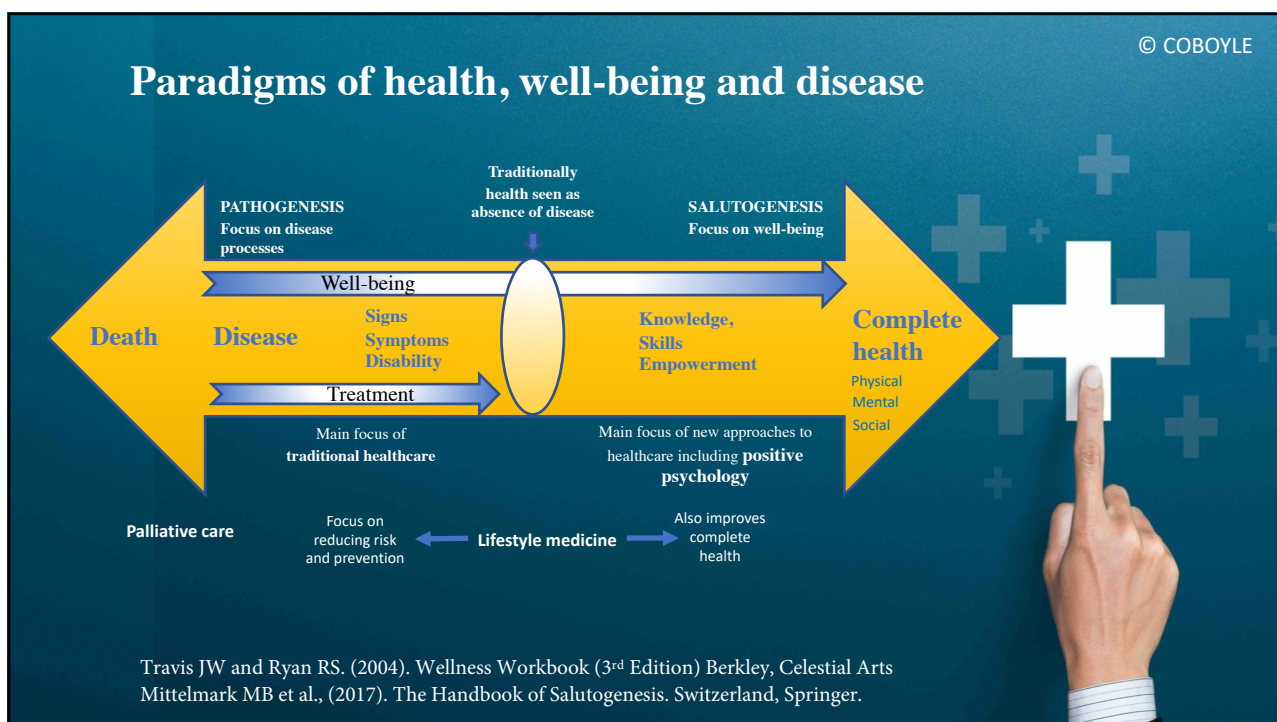
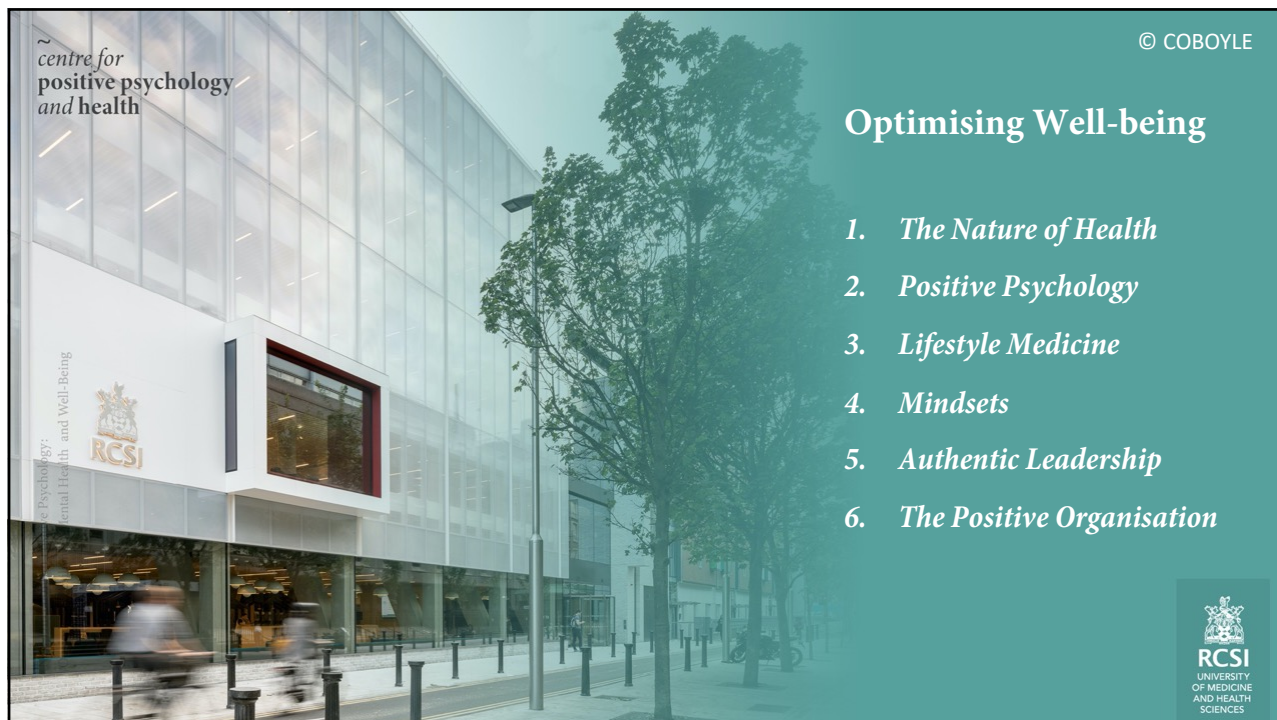
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## Science of Health and Happiness (35,000)

## Science of Health and Happiness for Young People (150,000)

## Science of Health and Happiness as We Age (3,000 in week 1)


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Academic programmes



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## What is Positive Psychology?

*“The scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive”*

(Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)

Ince S. (2011). *Positive Psychology: Harnessing the power of happiness, mindfulness, and personal growth*. Harvard Medical School Special Health Report. Harvard, MA; Seligman MEP, Csikszentmihalyi M (2000). *Positive Psychology: an introduction*. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.



## Positive Psychology?

- Based on the fundamental insight that treating mental illness is not the same as promoting mental health.
- Focus is not just on the absence of the negative.
- Joy, serenity, courage, optimism, peace, love, strength etc are important.

Lopez SJ, Snyder CR (2009) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (2nd ed.) Oxford, Oxford University Press.

## POSITIVE HEALTH

100+ Research-based Positive Psychology and Lifestyle Medicine Tools to Enhance Your Wellbeing

Jolanta Burke, Pádraic J. Dunne, Trudy Meehan, Ciaran A. O'Boyle and Christian van Nieuwerburgh



## What is Lifestyle Medicine?


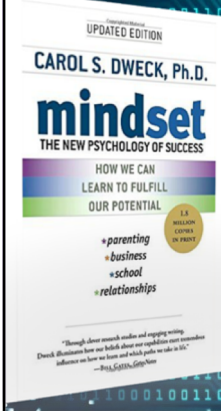
### The 6 Pillars of Lifestyle Medicine

- Diet
- Physical Activity
- Sleep
- Stress management
- Relationships
- Substance use

Egger G, Binns A, Rosser S, Sagner M. (2017) *Lifestyle Medicine* (3rd ed.) London, Academic Press  
 Frates B, Bonnet JP, Joseph J, Peterson JA. (2019). *Lifestyle Medicine Handbook: An Introduction To The Power Of Healthy Habits*. CA, Healthy Learning.





## FIXED and GROWTH MINDSETS?

|                          | Fixed Mindset   | Growth Mindset  |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Intelligence</b>      | Static  | Can be developed  |
| <b>Desire</b>            | Look smart  | Learn   |
| <b>Challenges</b>        | Avoid   | Embrace   |
| <b>Obstacles</b>         | Give up easily  | Persist   |
| <b>Effort</b>            | Seen as fruitless or worse                            | Seen as path to mastery   |
| <b>Criticism</b>         | Ignore useful negative feedback                       | Learn from criticism  |
| <b>Success of others</b> | Feel threatened                                       | Find lessons and inspiration  |
| <b>Outcome</b>           | Plateau early; Achieve less; Deterministic world view | Reach ever higher levels of achievement; Greater sense of free will |

## The Journey to a Growth Mindset

- Embrace challenges
- Persist in the face of setbacks
- See effort as part of the journey
- Learn from criticism
- Find inspiration in the resilience of others
- Tap into your “calling”

## The Way of the Stoic

### The Obstacle Becomes the Way

*"The mind adapts and converts to its own purposes the obstacle to our acting. The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way."*

Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD)  
Meditations, Book 5.20


## Optimism mindset

### Altering pessimism:

1. Tune in to your most catastrophic thoughts
2. Treat them as if said to you by someone whose goal in life is to make you miserable
3. Argue back and dispute as you would to a person, rationally

Seligman M. (1998) *Learned Optimism*. NY, Alfred Knopf





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## Association of Optimism With Cardiovascular Events and All-Cause Mortality

### A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

Alan Rozanski, MD; Chirag Bavishi, MD, MPH; Laura D. Kubzansky, PhD; Randy Cohen, MD

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**Abstract**

**IMPORTANCE** Optimism and pessimism can be easily measured and are potentially modifiable mindsets that may be associated with cardiovascular risk and all-cause mortality.

**OBJECTIVE** To conduct a meta-analysis and systematic review of the association between optimism and risk for future cardiovascular events and all-cause mortality.

**DATA SOURCES AND STUDY SELECTION** PubMed, Scopus, and PsycINFO electronic databases were systematically searched from inception through July 2, 2019, to identify all cohort studies investigating the association between optimism and pessimism and cardiovascular events and/or all-cause mortality by using the following Medical Subject Heading terms: *optimism, optimistic explanatory style, pessimism, outcomes, endpoint, mortality, death, cardiovascular events, stroke, coronary artery disease, coronary heart disease, ischemic heart disease, and cardiovascular disease*.

**DATA EXTRACTION AND SYNTHESIS** Data were screened and extracted independently by 2 investigators (A.R. and C.B.). Adjusted effect estimates were used, and pooled analysis was performed using the Hartung-Knapp-Sidik-Jonkman random-effects model. Sensitivity and subgroup analyses were performed to assess the robustness of the findings. The Meta-analysis of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (MOOSE) reporting guideline was followed.

**Key Points**

**Question** Is a mindset of optimism associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular events and all-cause mortality?

**Findings** In this meta-analysis of 15 studies including 229 391 individuals, optimism was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular events and pessimism was associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular events; the pooled association was similar to that of other well-established cardiac risk factors.

**Meaning** The findings suggest that a mindset of optimism is associated with lower cardiovascular risk and that promotion of optimism and reduction in pessimism may be important for preventive health.

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## PERMA Mindset

**Positive Emotion.** Experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, joy, excitement, contentment etc



**Engagement.** Fulfilment by engaging in activities which are interesting and absorbing - that help us to achieve a sense of 'flow' – contented immersion in an activity where sense of self and time is suspended.

**Relationships.** Nurturing healthy relationships with those around us is important for our overall happiness; provides attachment, support, feeling valued and being loved.


**Meaning.** Meaning and purpose in our daily lives is crucial for happiness. Involves pursuing highly valued goals and often serving something bigger than ourselves

**Accomplishment.** Important for giving us feelings of mastery and achievement.

Introducing a New Theory of Well-Being

Seligman MEP (2011)  
*Flourish*. NY: Free Press



## Burnout, meaning and purpose

1. Meaning and purpose in life are synergistic and can fuel sustained engagement and creativity particularly in times of adversity.
2. Physicians “sense of calling” strongly associated with meaning in life and inversely associated with burnout.
3. Finding meaning in work protects physicians and nurses from burnout.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2019. *Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25521>. pp98-99.



## Strengths Mindset

Language ▼

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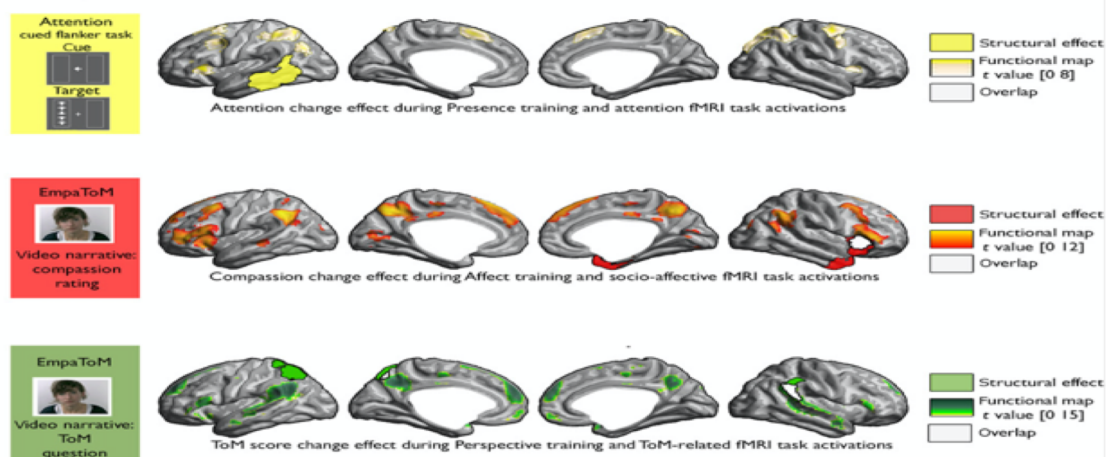


## Signature Strengths

- Identify your signature strengths
- Use them in relationships, work and leisure
- Choose work that lets you use them every day
- Recraft your work to use your strengths
- Managers: make room for your people to use their strengths

## Meditation mindset: changing the structure of our brains

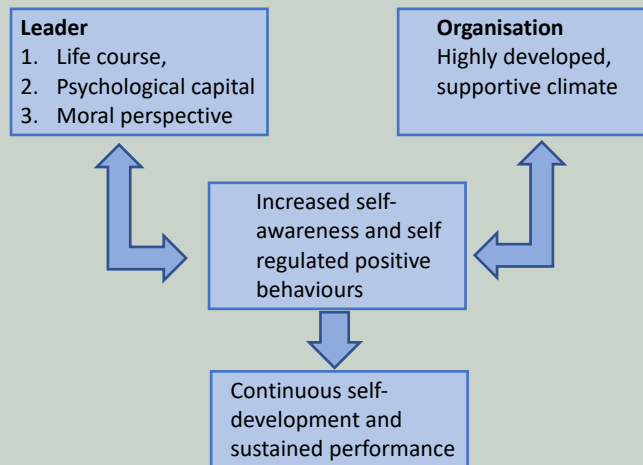
### B Overlap with task-based functional activations at baseline



Valk SL, Bernhardt BC, Trautwein FM et al. (2017). Structural plasticity of the social brain: Differential change after socio-affective and cognitive mental training. Science Advances 2017: 3, 10, e1700489 DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1700489

## Authentic Leadership

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Avolio BJ et al., *Ann Rev Psychol*, 2009, 60:421-449;  
O'Boyle CA (2020). Authentic Clinical Leadership in a Crisis.

<https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/coronavirus/healthcare-professionals/leadership>



## Authentic Leadership

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1. **Know yourself** - demonstrates understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses and the way one makes sense of the world
2. **Do the right thing** - being guided by internal moral perspectives that are used to self-regulate one's behaviour
3. **Be genuine and compassionate** - presenting one's authentic self through openly sharing information and feelings as appropriate for situations
4. **Be fair-minded** - objectively analysing relevant data before making a decision

Avolio BJ et al., *Ann Rev Psychol*, 2009, 60:421-449;  
O'Boyle CA (2020). Authentic Clinical Leadership in a Crisis.

<https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/coronavirus/healthcare-professionals/leadership>






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<https://www.mindgarden.com/69-authentic-leadership-questionnaire>



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Our products: Authentic Leadership Questionnaire


**Authors: Bruce J. Avolio, William L. Gardner, & Fred O. Walumbwa**

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) is designed to measure the components that comprise Authentic Leadership.

The ALQ scales address the following questions:

- **Self Awareness:** To what degree is the leader aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her and how the leader impacts others?
- **Transparency:** To what degree does the leader reinforce a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions?
- **Ethical/Moral:** To what degree does the leader set a high standard for moral and ethical conduct?
- **Balanced Processing:** To what degree does the leader solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions?

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## Developing you authentic leadership

1. Learn from your life story
2. Become self-aware
3. Practice your values and principles
4. Balance your extrinsic and intrinsic motivations
5. Build your support team
6. Integrate your life by staying grounded
7. Empower people to lead

- George B et al., *Discovering your authentic leadership*, HBR, Feb 2007: 129-138;
- Reichard RJ, Avolio BJ. 2005. *Where are we? The status of leadership intervention research: a meta-analytic summary*. In: *Authentic Leadership and Practice: Origins*. WL Gardner, BJ Avolio, FO Walumbwa (Eds.), pp. 203–26. Oxford, Elsevier Sci.



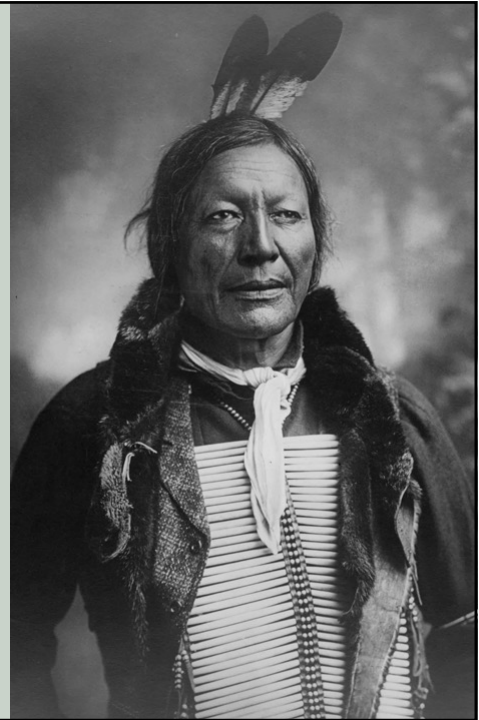
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## Turning Organisations Positive

### Changing the music

1. Create a Sense of Purpose
2. Nurture Authentic Conversations
3. See possibility
4. Embrace the Common Good
5. Trust the Emergent Process

Quinn R. (2015). *The Positive Organisation*. San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler



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## Positive Practices and Organisational Effectiveness

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Intervention study 2005 -2007 in 29 nursing units in the US.

Units that improved most by implementing 6 positive practices: **caring, compassionate support, forgiveness, inspiration, meaning and respect, integrity and gratitude** showed significant increases in measures of:

- Patient satisfaction with pain management
- Organisational climate
- Participation in hospital affairs
- Foundations for quality care
- Resource adequacy
- Support of nurses by managers
- Nurse/physician relationships

Cameron KS, Mora C, Leutscher T, Calarco M (2011). Effects of positive practices on organisational effectiveness. *J Appl Beh Sci*, 47(3): 266-308





## Positive Management

1. Make meetings uplifting; and end on a positive note
2. Celebrate and prolong good news
3. In challenging situations, focus on the things we can control
4. Avoid continuously recycling negativity
5. Map out team strengths
6. Show appreciation and gratitude
7. Help staff identify the meaning of their their contribution
8. Take care of one's own health (sleep, diet, physical activity)

Fredrickson BL (2009). *Positivity*. New York, Crown Publishers; Cameron K. (2012 ) *Positive Leadership*. CA. Berrett-Koehler. Niemiec RM. (2017) *Character Strengths Interventions*. Boston, Hogrefe.



## Mindsets: The Way of the Stoic

“The chief task in life is simply this: to identify and separate matters so that I can say clearly to myself which are externals not under my control, and which have to do with the choices I actually control. Where then do I look for good and evil? Not to the uncontrollable externals, but within myself to the choices that are my own...”

*Epictetus*  
*Discourses 2.5.4-5*



## Resources: Positive Psychology

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- Seligman MEP (2011) *Flourish*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London



## Resources: Lifestyle Medicine

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## Resources: Positive Organisations

- Cameron K (2010). Bringing a positive lens to troubled situations.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vsf-yL8GT0&feature=youtu.be>
- Cameron K. (2012) Positive Leadership. Barret-Koehler, San Francisco.
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