PERSONALITY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

STUDY MATERIAL

B.SC COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

VI SEMESTER

ADDITIONAL COURSE IN LIEU OF PROJECT

(2011 ADMISSION)

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

THENJIPALAM, CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O., MALAPPURAM, KERALA - 673 635

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

B.SC COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

ADDITIONAL COURSE IN LIEU OF PROJECT

PERSONALITY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Prepared and Scrutinised by :

Dr.C.Jayan

Professor,

Department of Psychology,

University of Calicut

Type settings & Lay out

Computer Section, SDE

©

Reserved

1. PERSONALITY

a) BIG FIVE FACTOR MODEL

CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY AND TRAIT

Personality refers to an individual's description in general and provides a universal taxonomy or framework to compare individuals and account for everybody's individuality at the same time. Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought. Psychologists define personality in many different ways, but common to all of the ways are two basic concepts: 'uniqueness' and 'characteristic patterns of behavior'. Thus personality is the complex set of psychological qualities that influence an individual's characteristic patterns of behavior across different situations and over time.

Traits are enduring qualities or attributes that predispose individuals to behave consistently across situations. Traits are used to describe *and* explain behavior—they are *internal* (associated with characteristics of the individual, rather than the situation or context) and *causal* (influence behavior). The study of personality traits is concerned with the structural differences and similarities among individuals. Starting from a general classification of these stable and observable patterns of behavior *(taxonomy),* it attempts to assess the extent to which individuals differ on these dimensions to predict differences in other observable behaviors, outcomes, or constructs, such as happiness, health, reaction time, or academic and job performance. From the first known attempts to identify major individual differences and elaborate a taxonomy of personality (usually acknowledged to the ancient Greek classification *of humours* and temperaments) to the current *state-of-the-art* differential and behavioral genetic approaches, personality theorists have attempted to identify, assess, explain, and predict systematic differences and similarities between individuals, looking for the fundamental and general causes of human behavior.

Traits are internal dispositions that color how we see and interpret the world. Traits influence the meanings we give to life events, the choices we make, the goals we select, and the actions we take. They represent what Diener (1984) called 'top down' influences on well-being. That is, our inner dispositions (top) exert stable and pervasive influences on many aspects of our lives (down) that affect our health and happiness. Although conceptual distinctions can be drawn among them, many individual characteristics are interconnected and share overlapping meanings. For example, personality traits have been viewed as intimately connected with emotions (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 1991; Watson, 2002) and with generalized beliefs about the self (Robinson & Clore, 2002). McCrae and Costa defined traits intensively as "dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings, and actions" (McCrae & Costa, 2003, p. 25).

As is the case in most modern disciplines, the beginnings of personality theory date back to the times of the ancient Greeks. This conceptualization of personality traits, credited to Hippocrates (460-370 BC), was an attempt to classify the major descriptors underlying individual differences in terms of four different types, which were a function of biological differences in fluids or "humours"—namely, the *sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic,* and *melancholic* temperaments. According to the Greek physician Galen (130-200 AD), who reinterpreted Hippocrates' theory, differences in personality were a direct reflection of constitutional differences in the body. The *sanguine* personality described enthusiastic, positive, and cheerful individuals, satisfied with life and generally enjoying good mental as well as physical health. This type of personality was associated with high levels of blood supply (or the strength of the blood), hence the term *sanguine* from the Latin *sanguis* (blood). A second type of personality, the *choleric* one, was used to characterize aggressive, tense, volatile, and hot-tempered individuals and was believed to be caused by levels of the bile chemical released by the gall bladder during the processes of digestion. A third personality type, *the phlegmatic,* referred to individuals with a tendency to be dull, lazy, and apathetic, and who live a slowly paced life. This personality type was associated with the mucus from the lungs or phlegm, typical during flu or lung infection. Phlegmatic individuals are the opposite of sanguine and

choleric ones, the former being cold (both physically and psychologically), and the two latter types being warm. The fourth type of personality (also believed to be warm), the *melancholic* one, appears more familiar to our everyday language surely because it is the origin of a widely used word in our times. Melancholic individuals were believed to be chronically sad or depressed, reflective, and have a pessimistic approach to life. The biological origin of melancholy was believed to be the malfunctioning of an organ called *black bile,* but this idea was probably abandoned after the middle ages.

The most notable psychologist and personality theorist to be influenced by the Greek classification of humours was Hans Eysenck (1916-1997). In the early developments of his personality theory, which was strictly empirical and psychometrically founded, Eysenck identified two major universal personality traits that could be used to account for a general description of individual differences. These traits are Neuroticism and Extraversion; they still persist in most well established personality taxonomies.

BIG FIVE FACTORS

In recent years trait theory has come to be dominated by the Five-Factor Model of Personality (McCrae & Costa, 2008). This model includes the following dimensions that are referred to as the big five: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. These five factors are very stable across a person's lifetime and have been validated in cultures around the world. Each of the five global traits is made up of more specific, subordinate traits, as shown in table 1.1

The Big Five personality framework is originated from the lexical hypothesis—the assumption that the major dimensions of behavior could be mapped onto (or derived from) the words that exist in our language to describe a person. Almost 70 years ago, Allport and Odbert (1936) reported 18,000 *descriptors* of an individual in the English language. This group of words was later reduced to approximately 8,000 and then 4,500 (see Norman, 1967) based on the elimination of evaluative, ambiguous, and unfamiliar words, as well as terms that referred to physical (rather than psychological) aspects. As explained, the lexical hypothesis refers to the idea that these words (derived from lay rather than scientific knowledge) would provide a comprehensive frame of reference to establish a taxonomy for the underlying personality dimensions of human beings.

Despite the lack of theoretical rationale for the etiology of traits identified by the Five Factor model, there has been enough consensus and empirical evidence in support of the identification of the Big Five as the universal dimensions of personality (Costa, 1997; Costa & McCrae, 1992; Deary & Matthews, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1997b). As in Cattell's and Eysenck's models, the Big Five conceptualizes individual differences that refer to stable patterns of behavior and are independent from each other. The Big Five model proposed by Costa and McCrae derived from the re-analysis (via a statistical technique called *cluster analysis*) of Cattell's 16PF (Costa & McCrae, 1976). The central idea of FFT is that traits must be distinguished from most of the attributes studied by psychologists—attitudes, beliefs, values, habits, skills, roles, relationships, and so forth. All of these latter attributes can and do change with time and circumstance, whereas traits (by and large) do not. "Traits provide the stable structure of personality within which the aging individual copes, adapts, defends, compensates, or adjusts" (Costa & McCrae, 1980, p. 97).

NEUROTICISM

The first main personality trait is *Neuroticism.* It can be described as the tendency to experience negative emotions, notably anxiety, depression, and anger (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000). Neurotic individuals can be characterized for their tendency to experience anxiety, as opposed to the typically calm, relaxed, and stable (low Neuroticism) personalities. People high in neuroticism tend to be tense, anxious, moody, and more emotionally reactive to events than most people. They experience more frequent negative emotions like anger and depression, and are more impulsive, self-conscious, and vulnerable. Emotional stability is the opposite of neuroticism and is characterized by calmness, emotional

control, feelings of security, low reactivity, and relative freedom from persistent negative feelings. The primary facets of Neuroticism are anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability.

EXTRAVERSIN

The second major personality dimension is *Extraversion.* This factor refers to high activity (arousal), the experience of positive emotions, impulsiveness, assertiveness, and a tendency toward social behavior (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000). Conversely, low Extraversion (Introversion) is characterized by rather quiet, restrained, and withdrawn behavioral patterns. Like Neuroticism, Extraversion is present in both Eysenck and Eysenck's (1985) and Costa and McCrae's (1992) personality models. The sub facets of Extraversion are warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, and positive emotions.

AGREEABLENESS

A third factor, *Agreeableness* (also known as Sociability), refers to friendly, considerate, and modest behavior. This factor is associated with a tendency toward friendliness and nurturance (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000). It reflects a person’s concern with getting along and cooperating with others, even if it means compromising their own interests. Antagonism or disagreeableness is at the opposite end of this continuum and is characterized by suspicion and distrust of others, and a conniving, selfish, non-complaint, hard-hearted, and cynical stance toward others. It comprises the sub facets of trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. Agreeable people can thus be described as caring, friendly, warm, and tolerant (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This personality trait is negatively related to Psychoticism and (together with Conscientiousness) is a main exponent of social behavior in general.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Conscientiousness refers to people’s level of discipline, self-control and organization. Highly conscientious people are organized, competent, self-disciplined, deliberative, persistent, and dutiful, and have strong strivings for achievement. At the opposite end of this continuum, undirectedness is characterized by less competence, lack of achievement orientation, disorganization, impulsivity, carelessness, and neglectfulness. *Conscientiousness* is associated with responsibility and persistence (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000). This factor includes the second order dimensions of competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation. Conscientious individuals are best identified for their efficiency, organization, determination, and productivity. No wonder, then, that this personality dimension has been reported to be significantly associated with various types of performance.

OPENNESS TO EXOERIENCE

Openness to experience describes the difference between people who are imaginative and creative and those who are more conventional and down-to-earth. Openness to experience includes specific traits related to fantasy, preference for variety and novelty, aesthetics (appreciation for art and beauty), and independence. *Openness to Experience*—derived from the ideas of Coan (1974) and represents the tendency to involve oneself in intellectual activities and experience new sensations and ideas (Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 2000). This factor is also referred to as Creativity, Intellect, or Culture (Goldberg, 1994; Johnson, 1994; Saucier, 1994a, 1994b, Trapnell, 1994) and Tender-Mindedness or Affection (Brand, Egan, & Deary, 1993). It comprises six scales—namely, fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. In a general sense, Openness to Experience is associated with intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity, vivid imagination, behavioral flexibility, and unconventional attitudes (McCrae, 1993). People high on Openness to Experience tend to be dreamy, imaginative, inventive, and nonconservative in their thoughts and opinions (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Poets and artists may be regarded as typical examples of high Openness scorers (McCrae & Costa, 1997a).Conversely, non-openness is characterized by practical mindedness, preference for routine over variety, preference for the straight-forward over complex, and greater conformity.

Table 1.1 Strengths entitled by the Five Factor Model of Personality

Factor	Components		Correlated positive trait adjective
Emotional Stability (Neuroticism)	N1	Courage / anxiety	Not tense
	N2	Calmness / angry hostility	Not irritable
	N3	Happiness / depression	Contented
	N4	Positive self-regard / self-consciousness	Not shy
	N5	Impulse control / impulsiveness	Not moody
	N6	Resilience / vulnerability	Self-confident
Extraversion	E1	Warmth	Outgoing
	E2	Gregariousness	Sociable
	E3	Assertiveness	Forceful
	E4	Activity	Energetic
	E5	Excitement seeking	Adventurous
	E6	Positive emotions	Enthusiastic
Openness to experience	O1	Fantasy	Imaginative
	O2	Aesthetics	Artistic
	O3	Feelings	Excitable
	O4	Actions	Wide interests
	O5	Ideas	Curious
	O6	Values	Unconventional
Agreeableness	A1	Trust	Forgiving
	A2	Straightforwardness	Not demanding
	A3	Altruism	Warm
	A4	Compliance	Not stubborn
	A5	Modesty	Not show off
	A6	Tender-mindedness	Sympathetic
Conscientiousness	C1	Competence	Efficient
	C2	Order	Organized
	C3	Dutifulness	Not careless
	C4	Achievement striving	Thorough
	C5	Self-discipline	Not lazy
	C6	Deliberation	Not impulsive

BIG FIVE FACTORS IN RELATION TO WELL-BEING, COPING, RELATIONSHIPS, AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Meta-analyses and systematic reviews provide strong evidence that positive scores on the big five traits – reflecting personal strengths – are associated with positive adjustment in a range of domains including well-being, coping, longevity, healthy behavior, relationships, creativity, academic achievement, and occupational adjustment.

BIG FIVE AND WELL-BEING

In a meta-analysis of 347 samples containing over 100,000 cases, Steel *et al.* (2008) found strong correlations between scores on the big five traits and a range of indices of well-being including happiness, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and quality of life. Schmutte and Ryff (1997) found a pattern of relationships between each of the big five personality traits and measures of psychological well-being, suggesting that the influence of personality extends beyond its effects on happiness. Ryff's conception of psychological well-being describes six aspects of psychological functioning:

- Self-acceptance: a positive evaluation of self and one's past
- Environmental mastery: competence in managing one's life and environment
- Positive relations: high quality connections to others
- Purpose in life: strong sense of meaning and purpose in life
- Personal growth: sense of continuing growth and development as an individual
- Autonomy: sense of self as directing and determining actions and choices

Neuroticism was inversely linked with each of the six psychological well-being dimensions, while extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness showed consistent positive correlations with psychological well-being. Openness to experience showed weak positive connections to overall well-being. Neuroticism seems to undercut happiness and optimal psychological functioning, while extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness appear to be foundations for happiness and health.

Schmutte and Ryff's findings suggest that personality may contribute to well-being in multiple ways – not just by influencing positive affect. The influence of neuroticism and extraversion on happiness is primarily the result of the effects of these traits on the positive and negative affect components of subjective well-being. Conscientiousness showed relatively strong correlations with self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life – the three important elements of psychological health. Openness to experience contributes to personal growth.

BIG FIVE FACTORS AND COPING

Coping strategies are consciously used to manage situations in which there is a perceived discrepancy between stressful demands and available resources for meeting these demands (Aldwin et al., 2010). There are many models of coping. These vary in their complexity and specificity. According to the Rudolph Moos' conceptual framework, factors within the individual's environmental system and their personal system, such as psychological, temperamental and neurobiological traits, and demographic attributes, all of which are relatively stable, influence changes in life circumstances such as life crises and transitions. All of these factors affect health and well-being both directly and indirectly through cognitive appraisal and coping and related neurobiological stress and coping process.

Dispositional models highlight the role of relatively stable personal factors determining the choice and effectiveness of coping strategies. In contextual models the choice and effectiveness of coping strategies is viewed as being largely determined by the nature of the stresses with which the person has to cope and the way these are appraised.

Within the stress and coping literature, many typologies of coping processes have been developed. One useful typology distinguishes between problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping strategies. Emotion focused coping strategies are appropriate for managing affective states associated with uncontrollable stresses such as bereavement. For controllable stresses such as job interviews, problem focused coping strategies, which aim to directly modify the source of stress, are more appropriate. In some situations where time-out from active coping is required to marshal personal resources before returning to active coping, avoidant coping may be appropriate. For all three coping styles, a distinction may be made between functional and dysfunctional strategies.

The character strengths of creativity and wisdom, which are personal attributes, are important for problem-focused coping. People with the personality traits of extraversion and conscientiousness tend to use problem-focused coping. Research on coping strategies used by people with different personality trait profiles has shown that more adaptive coping strategies are used by people with more personality trait strengths. In a meta-analysis of 165 samples containing over 33,000 participants, Connor-Smith and Flachsbart (2007) found that people who scored high on extraversion and conscientiousness were more likely to use problem solving and cognitive restructuring to cope with stress. In contrast, the use of more problematic strategies such as wishful thinking and withdrawal was associated with high scores on neuroticism.

BIG FIVE FACTORS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Emotional stability, extraversion and agreeableness are the three trait-based strengths important for satisfying relationships. In a review of longitudinal studies, Ozer and Benet- Martinez (2006) concluded that extraversion and agreeableness were associated with good peer relationships in children and adolescents, while in adulthood the traits emotional stability and agreeableness were associated with enduring and satisfying romantic relationships and marriages.

Close friendships are an important source of health and well-being across the lifespan. People choose friends who are broadly similar to themselves in terms of attributes, skills, and values. The capacity to make and maintain stable, supportive, and satisfying friendships is determined by many historical, personal and environmental factors. With respect to personality traits extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability facilitate the development of friendships.

Empathy and altruism are important for relationship formation and maintenance (de Wall, 2008). Behavior is motivated by altruism if our ultimate goal is to increase the welfare of another person. Altruistic motivation is evoked in many instances by empathic emotion. That is, by the emotional reaction we have to seeing another person in distress and needing help. Certain factors predispose us to experience emotional empathy when we see others in distress or in need of help. These include having a prosocial personality profile (Oliner & Oliner, 1988), having internalized prosocial values through the process of socialization (Staub, 1974), and having reached an advanced stage of moral development (Kohlberg, 1976). A central feature of the prosocial personality, in terms of the five-factor model is agreeableness. People with a prosocial personality score high on this trait, which is partially heritable and partially the result of socialization and early life experiences.

Trust and betrayal are important features of close relationships that affect well-being. Greater well-being is experienced in relationships characterized by trust and the absence of betrayal. Compared to trustworthy people, those who score high on the interpersonal betrayal scale tend to be younger, less well educated, to have had more unhappy childhoods, to have been married for a shorter duration or to be divorced, to have lower levels of social support and to have more psychological problems and disorders. In contrast, people who score in the trustworthy range of this scale tend to be better adjusted on all of these parameters and also show better self-control, subjective well-being, responsibility, tolerance, and psychological mindedness.

Betrayal, breaches of trust, acts of physical or psychological hostility all occur within friendships and romantic relationships. Forgiveness and atonement are important ways for curbing such escalating spirals (Worthington, 2005). Forgiveness is a personal prosocial response to an acknowledged transgression for which the transgressor was clearly responsible. Trait measures of forgiveness have been developed to evaluate the general disposition to forgive others. Forgiving people have distinctive personalities characterized by greater stability, agreeableness, and religiousness on the one hand, and less narcissistic entitlement (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Gratitude occurs in relationships when we acknowledge that we are the recipients of the prosocial behavior of others. Grateful people tend to be agreeable, emotionally stable, non-materialistic, and self-confident but not narcissistic (McCullough et al., 2001). Gratitude is also good for our health.

Emotional intelligence, emotional stability, and agreeableness are personality characteristics that are associated with marital satisfaction (Casey et al., 2010). This may be because stable, agreeable people with high emotional intelligence select partners who also have these attributes. It may also be because stable, agreeable people with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to perceive and understand their own and their partner's emotions; to use this information to enhance their relationship and solve relationship problems; and to regulate their emotion so as to maximize relationship satisfaction. Resilience is also associated with a number of broader personality traits and attributes including easy temperament, emotional stability, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. These attributes and traits probably confer the benefits of having a low psycho-physiological reactivity to, and rapid recovery from, exposure to stressors and trauma.

FIVE FACTORS AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Those who are high on openness to experience are highly motivated to learn new skills and they do well in training settings. They also have an advantage when they enter into a new organization. Their open-mindedness leads them to seek a lot of information and feedback about how they are doing and to build relationships, which leads to quicker adjustment to the new job. When given support, they tend to be creative. Compared with people low in openness, they are also more likely to start their own business. The potential downside is that they may also be prone to becoming more easily bored or impatient with routine.

Conscientiousness is the one personality trait that uniformly predicts how high a person's performance will be across a variety of occupations and jobs. In fact, conscientiousness is the trait most desired by recruiters and highly conscientious applicants tend to succeed in interviews. Once they are hired, conscientious people not only tend to perform well, but they also have higher levels of motivation to perform, lower levels of turnover, lower levels of absenteeism and higher levels of safety performance at work.

Extraverts tend to be effective as managers and they demonstrate inspirational leadership behaviors. They do well in social situations and, as a result, they tend to be effective in job interviews. Extraverts have an easier time than introverts when adjusting to a new job. They actively seek information and feedback and build effective relationships, which helps them adjust. Interestingly, extraverts are also found to be happier at work, which may be because of the relationships they build with the people around them and their easier adjustment to a new job. However, they do not necessarily perform well in all jobs; jobs depriving them of social interaction may be a poor fit. Moreover, they are not necessarily model employees. For example, they tend to have higher levels of absenteeism at work, potentially because they may miss work to hang out with or attend to the needs of their friends.

Agreeable people help others at work consistently. They may be a valuable addition to their teams and may be effective leaders because they create a fair environment when they are in leadership positions. People who are disagreeable are shown to quit their jobs unexpectedly, perhaps in response to a conflict with a boss or a peer.

People very high in neuroticism experience a number of problems at work. For example, they have trouble forming and maintaining relationships and are less likely to be people who approach others for advice and friendship. They tend to be habitually unhappy in their jobs and report high intentions to leave, but they do not necessarily actually leave their jobs. Being high in neuroticism seems to be harmful to one's career, as these employees have lower levels of career success. Finally, if they achieve managerial jobs, they tend to create an unfair climate at work. In contrast, people who are low in neuroticism tend to experience positive moods more often than negative moods. They tend to more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to their organizations. Whether these people are more successful in finding jobs and institutions that will make them happy, build better relationships at work that increase their satisfaction and commitment, or simply see their environment as more positive, it seems that low neuroticism is a strong advantage in the workplace.

b) CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND VIRTUES

Virtue and character strengths belong on a list of positive human traits. Virtuous behavior may also increase our life satisfaction and make life more meaningful and healthy. However, virtue is also considered a positive trait independent of any benefit or 'pay-off' to the individual. Virtue is positively regarded in its own right because of its connection to religious and secular mores and its value to society. A consideration of virtue and character strengths provides an additional way to think about the meaning of positive.

DEVELOPING A CLASSIFICATION OF HUMAN VIRTUES

Authors of the Values in Action Project (VIA) hoped to create a comprehensive classification system similar to the DSM, but one that was focused on human strengths rather than weaknesses. They also hoped to provide a language describing positive human qualities that defined a healthy person living a good life. Put another way, the DSM describes aspects of life 'below zero' (with zero representing the threshold diving mental health from emotional illness). One goal of the VIA was to describe life 'above zero' (i.e., to identify the traits that define emotional health and strength 0. This goal is consistent with positive psychology's emphasis on restoring balance to the field, in place of psychology's historic focus on problematic human behaviors. The VIA, coordinated by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004), brought together a group of researchers who sought to describe those strengths of character that were most prominent across history and culture.

The VIA classification system is based on a review of virtues and strengths referred to in major religious and philosophical traditions around the world. Through this review, the six virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence were identified. These virtues are ubiquitous and probably universal. They may be grounded in biology through an evolutionary process and selected as a means of managing important tasks necessary for survival of the species. Brief descriptions of each of the six virtues are given below;

1. Wisdom

As a virtue, wisdom refers to a general intellectual strength involving the development and use of knowledge. Wisdom does not necessarily follow from a formal education or a high IQ score. Wisdom refers to a more practical intelligence and good judgment based on learning life's lessons – perhaps through hardships. A wise person puts things in the proper perspective and avoids the pitfalls of narrowly focused and self-interested understandings. Wisdom means being able to offer good counsel to others about how to live and how to understand and deal with life's challenges, uncertainities, and choices.

2. Courage

Courage is the emotional strength to overcome fear in the face of opposition and adversity. Courage is exemplified in confronting and accepting one's own death; dealing with a debilitating illness or disease; honestly confronting one's own limitations, weaknesses, or bad habits; and standing up for one's convictions, despite the possibility of negative consequences.

3. Humanity

Humanity refers to our capacity for sympathy, empathy, compassion, and love in our relationships with others. Humanity is the basis for nurturing and caring relationships focused on another's needs rather than one's own needs and interests. Humanity is expressed in our willingness to help others in need, to be kind, to be generous, and to respect the feelings and values of others.

4. Justice

Justice is an essential ingredient in healthy societies, communities, and relationships with others. This virtue is shown when people are fair minded and even-handed rather than being biased by self-interest. Justice also includes strengths that contribute to community well-being, such as working cooperatively with others and taking the initiative to develop and follow through on goals and projects.

5. Temperance

Temperance is the strength to control excesses and restrain impulses that may harm the self and others. It expresses the idea of willpower in the face of temptations. Temptations and benefits of restraint might be focused on eating; drinking; smoking; expressing of anger, hatred, or arrogance toward others; or excessive self-promotion at the expense of others. Temperance is a kind of ongoing self-awareness and self-discipline that affirms the 'look before you leap' dictum of everyday wisdom. Temperance also involves the ability to let go and forgive the indiscretions and hurtful actions of others.

6. Transcendence

To transcend means to go beyond or rise above the ordinary and the everyday. Transcendent thinking lifts us out of the usual concrete preoccupations of daily life and about an individualized sense of self by providing a broader view of the world and the universe. Transcendence puts things in perspective and keeps us from worrying about or striving for things that don't really matter. Religion and spirituality are clearest examples of transcendence because they involve a belief in a higher power and a greater purpose for life. Whatever their various forms, transcendent beliefs connect the individual to a more encompassing understanding and a deeper meaning of life.

Peterson and Seligman regard these virtues as core defining features of good character. They represent moral virtues as defined by most religions and ethical philosophies. Each virtue is defined by a set of character strengths that represent the ingredients, expressions and potential means of developing the virtue. From an extensive list of strengths identified from the review, 24 were selected for inclusion in the system and classification under the six virtues if they met the majority of a set of clearly specified criteria. To be included as a character strength in the VIA classification system a positive characteristic had to be trait-like; be ubiquitous; lead to some form of fulfillment associated with the good life; be morally valued; not diminish other people; have a non-felicitous opposite; be measurable; be distinctive and different from other strengths; be strikingly displayed by paragons; be preciously shown in child or adolescent prodigies; be completely absent in some people; and be supported and cultivated by societal institutions. Talents and abilities such as intelligence or athleticism and characteristics not valued across all cultures such as cleanliness or frugality were excluded from the classification system. Strengths in each virtue group are similar insofar as they all involve core virtue, but they are also distinct from it. To be of good character, a person probably has to display one or two strengths within a virtue group. Character strengths are routes for achieving virtues.

Enabling conditions are factors that lead people to manifest given character strengths in given situations and hence contribute to virtues. Enabling conditions may include educational and vocational opportunities, a supportive and consistent family, safe neighborhoods and schools, political stability, and democracy. The existence of mentors, role models, and supportive peers, inside or outside the immediate family, are probably also enabling conditions. Brief descriptions of the strengths associated with each of the virtues are follows;

WISDOM

The character strengths of the virtue wisdom are creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and the capacity to take a broad perspective. These cognitive strengths involve the acquisition of knowledge and the use of reason to enhance well-being.

Creativity

To be creative, a person must be capable of producing new ideas and behaviors that lead to the formation of artistic, scientific, or other products that are adaptive. Creativity depends on both personal characteristics and aspects of the person's psychosocial context that can be assessed in a variety of ways. Creativity is distinct from genius, giftedness,, or wisdom.

Curiosity

A curious person is strongly motivated to acquire new experiences, knowledge, and information. In psychology distinctions are made between transitory states of interest on the one hand, and the enduring traits of curiosity, openness to experience, novelty seeking, and sensation seeking on the other. Openness to experience, one of the big five personality traits refers to receptivity to novel ideas, fantasies, feeling and values, while sensation seeking and novelty seeking are associated with risk taking. Curiosity and intrinsic motivation are essential for the development of skills and expertise, and so are related to experience of flow.

Open-mindedness

When faced with a decision in an uncertain situation, open-minded person looks at the problem from all angles, thinks things through rationally, examines all of the available evidence, doesn't jump to conclusions, can change his or her mind in light of new evidence, and finally reaches a balanced judgment. Within psychology open-mindedness has been investigated by psychologists concerned with critical thinking, judgment, and decision making.

Love of learning

A person with a strong love of learning is intrinsically motivated to master new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge and fulfils this need in a systematic way. In psychology the development of a love of learning has traditionally been referred to as achievement motivation and more recently as competence motivation. The development of intrinsic motivation to acquire competence and expertise in any field depends upon a person's natural talents and temperament on the one hand, and upon the opportunities and support provided within the developing person's environment on the other. Critical aspects of the environment include parents, teachers, peers, coaches, mentors, and employers as well as the prevailing socioeconomic conditions and cultural milieu.

Perspective

A person with perspective can provide wise counsel to others by listening carefully to them, seeing the 'big picture', making balanced judgments about available options, and expressing this in a coherent and convincing way. Within psychology wisdom is the term used for adopting this type of perspective. Wisdom has been conceptualized as an expert knowledge system associated with an advanced stage of cognitive and personality development. It involves using intelligence and creativity to balance the interests of involved parties and the pros and cons of various types of solutions to achieve an outcome that is consistent with moral values and the common good.

COURAGE

The character strengths of the virtue courage are authenticity, bravery, perseverance, and zest. These strengths are corrective insofar as they involve exercising one's will in the face of external or internal oppositional forces to enhance well-being.

Authenticity

The authentic person speaks the truth about themselves and the world. They present themselves in a genuine way without pretence and take responsibility for their beliefs, feelings, and behavior. They are honest and have personal integrity. Research on the psychology of moral development shows that the acquisition of these attributes is affected by personal attributes such as temperament and environmental factors, notably the quality of parenting and schooling as well as contact with prosocial peers. Research guided by self-determination theory has shown that autonomously pursuing valued goals, which is central to authenticity, is associated with well-being.

Bravery

A brave person faces physical and psychological threats, challenges, difficulties, and pain in a steadfast way. Bravery involves being courageous and standing up for what one believes to be right in the face of opposition.

Perseverance

A person with the character strength of perseverance finishes demanding and difficult tasks despite encountering obstacles to task completion and experiencing the temptation to quit. In psychology perseverance has been investigated under the heading of persistence, industriousness, and delayed gratification. In behavioral psychology, it has been found that greater persistence occurs after withdrawal of intermittent reinforcement than after withdrawal of continuous reinforcement. In cognitive psychology, it has been found that people with an optimistic explanatory style are more likely to persist at tasks than those with a pessimistic style, because they attribute success to their efforts, whereas those with a pessimistic explanatory style develop learned helplessness. Under many conditions greater persistence is shown by people with a high ability to delay gratification and high self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-control.

Zest

A person with character strength of zest approaches life with enthusiasm, excitement, energy, vigour, and vitality. They embrace life as an adventure and address tasks in a wholehearted way. Self-determination theory proposes that we are intrinsically motivated to engage in activities that satisfy psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy and that enhance vitality. In contrast, lifestyles focused on extrinsic goals lead to less vitality because they do not satisfy needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy.

HUMANITY

The character strength of the virtue humanity includes kindness, love, and social intelligence. These interpersonal strengths are used to deepen the quality of close, caring one-to-one relationships.

Kindness

A kind person does good deeds for others and takes care of them. They are altruistic, compassionate, nurturant, and generous. The psychological study of altruism has identified empathy as an important factor underpinning kindness and altruistic behavior. That is, empathic emotions lead to altruistic motivation, which has the aim of helping others despite costs to the self.

Love

Through the character strength of love we value and nurture close relationships with others in which sharing and caring are reciprocated. There are different types of love. These include the love of a parent for a child, a child for a parent, friends for each other, and romantic love. Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby, has played a central role in psychological study of all forms of love. The central hypothesis of attachment theory is that the motivation and capacity to make and maintain affectional bonds between children and parents, friends and romantic partners is biologically based and has been essential for the survival of our species. Patterns of care giving and receiving experienced by infants with their parents early in childhood are internalized and serve as templates for the development of close relationships with friends and romantic partners in adulthood. Securely attached infants develop into adults who have secure attachments with their friends and romantic partners.

Social intelligence

Through the character strength of social intelligence we maintain an awareness of the motives and feelings of ourselves and others so we can fit into different social situations. Social intelligence is the capacity to accurately recognize the psychological states of self and others, and manage our own psychological states and social situations effectively. It is distinguished from the type of intelligence measured by IQ tests; that is, the capacity to solve verbal and non-verbal tasks using skills such as remembering, detecting relationships, processing information quickly, and abstract reasoning. As conceptualized within the VIA classification system social intelligence subsumes the construct of emotional intelligence.

JUSTICE

The character strengths of the virtue justice are fairness, leadership, and teamwork. These social strengths are used to build strong social networks within teams, groups and communities. While the character strengths of the virtue humanity related primarily to relationships between two people, the character strengths of the virtue justice are relevant to networks of relationships within groups.

Fairness

A fair person treats all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice and does not let personal feelings bias fair decisions. Fairness is, therefore, an outcome of moral judgment. Within psychology, fairness has been studied as an aspect of moral development. The development of moral reasoning and behavior is fostered, in particular, by authoritative parenting and is associated with the development of perspective taking and empathy.

Leadership

Through the character strength of leadership a person organizes group activities, fosters good relationships between group members, and makes sure that the group completes its tasks. Within psychology there is a long tradition of leadership research. There is evidence that different types of leadership are appropriate for different situations and that effective leaders adjust their styles to suit the goals, characteristics, and stage of development of the group they are leading, their own and other group members' skills and strengths, and prevailing environment within which the group is operating.

Teamwork

Through the character strength of team work a person has good relationships with members of a work team, is loyal to the team, and does their fair share of the work. The strength of teamwork entails the concepts of social responsibility, citizenship, and working for the common good. The psychology of youth development and civic engagement is a developing field that has pointed to the important role of the family, school programs, and community volunteering programs that promote civic involvement in the development of citizenship. Most psychological research on teamwork has been conducted within the well established fields of organizational, occupational, and industrial psychology, whereas research on the psychology of citizenship and co-operation has been conducted within the relatively new field of political psychology.

TEMPERANCE

The character strengths of the virtue temperance are forgiveness, modesty, prudence, and self-regulation. These strengths protect us from a range of excesses. Forgiveness protects us from hatred. Modesty protects us from arrogance. Prudence protects us from long-term difficulties that may result from overindulging in short-term pleasures. Self-regulation protects us from acting out intense emotions in problematic ways.

Forgiveness

A forgiving person gives those who have wronged them a second chance, is merciful and not vengeful. Psychological studies of forgiveness have shown that it is a complex psychological process. It involves empathy with the transgressor and changes over time in beliefs, emotions, motivations, and behavior with respect to the transgressor. The forgiveness process is influenced by a range of factors including the extent of the transgression, the degree of apology or atonement that has occurred, the characteristics of the victim and transgressor, the relationship between them as well as the wider social context within which the transgression and forgiveness process occurs.

Modesty

A modest person lets their accomplishments speak for themselves and does not boast or regard themselves as more worthwhile than others. A modest person often shows humility. Humility involves accurate self-perception and acceptance of one's strengths and accomplishments and imperfections and failures, coupled with a greater focus on the value of all people and things than on the self. People feel less threatened by individuals who are humble and modest. Despite this, modesty and humility are exceptional characteristics because of our natural self-enhancing bias.

Prudence

a prudent person does not take undue risks and does not say or do things that might have short-term benefits but later be regretted. Thus, prudence is an approach to life where most decisions are made in light of an overarching concern for the long-term consequences of any action. Prudence is associated with a lifestyle marked by moderation and devoid of impulsivity and excesses that might bring short-term pleasures, but entail long-term risks. Prudence has been extensively studied under the name of conscientiousness, which is one of the big five personality traits. Conscientiousness contains the facets of competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation, and that conscientiousness is associated with academic achievement, occupational success, health, and longevity.

Self-regulation

Through the character strength of self-regulation, a person takes charge of their thoughts, emotions, appetites, and impulses in a disciplined way so they can pursue goals in painful ways and live up to standards rather than having their behavior governed by their initial responses to situations. Self-regulation has been referred to as self-control, self-discipline, and executive function. A central feature of self-regulation is over-riding initial responses and replacing these with better and more adaptive responses. Self-control has been shown to lead to positive outcomes in a range of areas such as eating, drinking, spending, sexuality, intelligent thought, making choices, and interpersonal behavior. However, acts of self-control deplete self-control resources and until these resources are replenished the ability to perform many adaptive behaviors is compromised.

TRANSCENDENCE

The character strengths of the virtue transcendence are appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, and religiousness. These strengths allow us to reach out beyond ourselves, maintain a connection to the wider universe, and create meaning in our lives. Appreciation connects us to all that is beautiful and excellent in life. Gratitude connects us to the good things for which we are thankful. Hope connects us to our future dreams and aspirations. Humour connects us to the challenges and complications of life in a way that brings forth positive rather than negative emotions. Religiousness or spirituality connects us to the non-material or transcendent dimension of life and to the ideal, universal, divine, or sacred aspect of the universe.

Appreciation of beauty and excellence

Through the character strength of appreciation, a person notices and appreciates beauty, excellence and skilled performance in all areas of life including everyday experience, nature, science, art and acts of virtue such as displays of kindness, forgiveness, or bravery. A person who has the strength of appreciation in response to physical beauty experiences awe; in response to skill experiences admiration; and in response to acts of virtue experiences moral elevation. Some aspects of appreciation are similar to the aesthetics facet of the openness to experience trait, which is one of the big five personality traits.

Gratitude

A grateful person takes time to be aware of and thankful for the good things that happen in their lives, and experiences joy as a result of experiencing these good things. The psychological study of gratitude is a relatively recent endeavour. A distinction is made between personal and transpersonal gratitude. Personal gratitude is thankfulness towards a person for their gift or for their 'being'. Transpersonal gratitude is thankfulness to a deity or to the universe for specific things or for the experience of existence. A distinction may also be made between the emotional state of gratitude – being thankful on a specific occasion – and trait gratitude – the disposition to be thankful. Trait gratitude is associated with the traits of emotional stability, agreeableness, self-confidence, and the absence of narcissism and materialism.

Hope

A hopeful person expects the best and works to achieve it. Within psychology research on hope, dispositional optimism, and optimistic explanatory style are well established and measures of all of these constructs have been developed. Correlational, experimental, and clinical studies all show that hope, optimism, optimistic explanatory style are associated with happiness, adaptive coping, relationships and both physical and mental health.

Humour

Through the character strength of humour a person brings smiles to other people by pointing out the humorous side of life's challenges and through playfulness, laughing, and joking. Within psychology there is a long tradition of investigating humour, wit, comedy, satire, joking, laughing, and playfulness. Distinctions may be made between cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and physiological aspects of

humour, as well as between humour perception and acting humorously. Humour and play develop in sophistication during childhood and adolescence. Humour can fulfill positive functions such as building relationships, coping with stress, releasing tensions, and so forth, but may also be used to express aggression and disparage others. Some forms of humour have positive effects on physical and mental health, and there is some evidence for the successful incorporation of humour into psychotherapeutic, educational, and workplace interventions.

Religiousness

Through the character strength of religiousness or spirituality a person maintains beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of existence. Beliefs about where we fit into larger scheme of things guide our behavior and bring coherence to our lives. Religion is associated with well-being when it is internalized, intrinsically motivated, and integrated into one's life, and its impact on well-being is especially strong under conditions of stress and disadvantage.

CHARACTER STRENGTHS IN RELATION TO WELL-BEING, JOB PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION

A series of studies suggest that zest, hope, love, and gratitude are strongly associated with well-being in children, adolescents, and adults. Peterson et al. (2007) found that zest, hope, and love were the top three strengths most strongly correlated with life satisfaction, gratitude and perseverance also correlated with life satisfaction. They also found that particular strengths were associated with orientations to life based on pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Humour was most strongly associated with the life orientation; zest was most strongly associated with the engaged life orientation; and religiousness was most strongly associated with the more meaningful life orientation. Zest, hope, love and gratitude were found to be the strengths most strongly associated with life satisfaction in an internet study of 5299 adults conducted by Park et al. (2004). In contrast, life satisfaction was only weakly associated with modesty, appreciation of beauty, creativity, judgment, and love of learning.

The finding that zest, hope, love, and gratitude were most strongly associated with happiness was replicated in a study of 308 young adults in Japan (Shimai, et al., 2006). Gratitude is more strongly associated with well-being than any of the big five personality traits. Experimental and clinical studies in which people are invited to count their blessing by recalling or recording in detail things that they are thankful for, or writing gratitude letters to people who they wish to thank, have shown that these types of interventions increase well-being.

In an internet study of 7348 adults, Peterson et al. (2010) found that character strengths of curiosity, zest, hope, gratitude, and spirituality were associated with work satisfaction. Good character was not unique to any specific occupation. In an internet study of 9803 employees, Peterson et al. (2009) found that zest predicted the stance that work was a calling, as well as work satisfaction, and general life satisfaction.

2) HAPPINESS, OPTIMISM, HOPE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

a) POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Affect is a person's immediate, physiological response to a stimulus, and it is typically based on an underlying sense of arousal. Specifically, Professor Nico Frijda (1999) reasoned that affect involves the appraisal of an event as painful or pleasurable – that is, its valence – and the experience of autonomic arousal. Positive affect is a summary term for pleasurable emotions such as joy, contentment, laughter, and love. Positive affect may enhance people's ability to find meaning and purpose in their lives. Positive emotions may also be markers of meaningful events and activities. Progressing toward important goals makes us feel good. Judgments of global life satisfaction are enhanced by a current or recent positive mood. People who characteristically experience many positive emotions (i.e., trait positive affectivity) report greater meaningfulness in their lives than people who typically experience more frequent negative emotions (i.e., trait negative affectivity).

Positive and negative affect are, in fact, two independent dimensions of people's long term emotional experience (Watson, 2002). In brief, the Negative Affect dimension represents the extent to which an individual experiences negative emotional states such as fear, anger, sadness, guilt, contempt, and disgust; conversely, positive affect reflects the extent to which one experiences positive states such as joy, interest, confidence, and alertness. Both of these dimensions can be assessed either as a short-term state or as a long term trait (in which case they typically are referred to as "negative affectivity" and "positive affectivity," respectively). These two affect dimensions represent the subjective components of more general biobehavioral systems that have evolved to address very different evolutionary tasks (Tomarken & Keener, 1998; Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999). Specifically, negative affect is a component of the withdrawal-oriented behavioral inhibition system. The essential purpose of this system is to keep the organism out of trouble by inhibiting behavior that might lead to pain, punishment, or some other undesirable consequence. In sharp contrast, positive affect is a component of the approach-oriented behavioral facilitation system, which directs organisms toward situations and experiences that potentially may yield pleasure and reward. This system is adaptive in that it ensures the procuring of resources (e.g., food and water, warmth and shelter, the cooperation of others, sexual partners) that are essential to the survival of both the individual and the species.

Given that they reflect very different evolutionary pressures, it is not surprising that negative and positive affect naturally are highly distinctive dimensions that are associated with fundamentally different classes of variables.

Positive affectivity is a trait that reflects stable individual differences in positive emotional experience. Individuals high on this dimension experience frequent and intense episodes of pleasant, pleasurable mood; generally speaking, they are cheerful, enthusiastic, energetic, confident, and alert. In contrast, those persons who are low in positive affectivity report substantially reduced levels of happiness, excitement, vigor, and confidence.People high in positive affectivity have frequent and intense experiences of pleasant, enjoyable moods and are generally cheerful, enthusiastic, and confident about their lives. People high in negative affectivity have more frequent emotional episodes involving feelings of anger, sadness, distress, guilt, and fear (Watson et al., 1988). Positive and negative affectivity are very stable over periods ranging from a few weeks to 24 years (McCrae et al., 2000). Diener and Larsen (1984) found that an individual's emotional experiences were consistent across different activities. A person's self reported mood was very similar whether he or she was socializing, working, recreating, or spending time alone. Our basic affective orientation appears to show itself wherever we go and whatever we do.

Positive affect is one of the strongest predictive components of happiness. Positive affectivity is built in to the emotional component of subjective well-being. Watson's research is perhaps most not worthy for having identified the most central defining feature of happy people, namely positive affectivity. Happy people seem best characterized as people who experience lots of positive emotions. Watson's research suggests that the bottom line of differences in people's levels of happiness boils down to differences in positive and negative affectivity. Low levels of positive affectivity are associated with a number of clinical syndromes, including social phobia, agoraphobia, posttraumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorder, and the substance disorders (Mineka, Watson, & Clark, 1998; Watson, 2000). However, low positive affectivity plays a particularly salient role in the mood disorders (Clark, Watson, & Mineka, 1994; Mineka et al., 1998; Watson, 2000; Watson et al., 1999). It is strongly linked to the melancholic subtype of major depression, which is characterized by either a "loss of pleasure in all, or almost all, activities" or a "lack of reactivity to usually pleasurable stimuli" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 384). It also is noteworthy that positive affectivity scores have predicted the subsequent development of depression in prospective data. These findings raise the intriguing possibility that lack of positive affectivity may be an important vulnerability factor for mood disorder (Clark et al. 1994). Individuals who are high in positive affectivity feel good about themselves and their world.

Consequently, they report greater satisfaction with important aspects of their lives. For instance, positive affectivity is a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin, 1998; Watson, 2000; Watson & Slack, 1993). Positive affectivity also is significantly correlated with marital and relationship satisfaction.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence represents the ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotion accurately and adaptively; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate cognitive activities and adaptive action; and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). In other words, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem solving and to focus energy on required behaviors. The term suggested to some that there might be other ways of being intelligent than those emphasized by standard IQ tests, that one might be able to develop these abilities, and that an emotional intelligence could be an important predictor of success in personal relationships, family functioning, and the workplace. The term is one that instills hope and suggests promise, at least as compared with traditional notions of crystallized intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand feelings in the self and others, and to use these feelings as informational guides for thinking and action (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotional intelligence can be divided into four dimensions. The first of these dimensions, *emotional perception and expression*, involves recognizing and inputting verbal and nonverbal information from the emotion system. The second dimension, *emotional facilitation of thought* (sometimes referred to as *using emotional intelligence*), refers to using emotions as part of cognitive processes such as creativity and problem solving. The third dimension, *emotional understanding*, involves cognitive processing of emotion, that is, insight and knowledge brought to bear upon one's feelings or the feelings of others. The fourth dimension, *emotional management*, concerns the regulation of emotions in oneself and in other people.

The first dimension of emotional intelligence begins with the capacity to perceive and to express feelings. Emotional intelligence is impossible without the competencies involved in this branch (see also Saarni, 1990, 1999). If each time unpleasant feelings emerged, people turned their attentions away, they would learn little about feelings. Emotional perception involves registering, attending to, and deciphering emotional messages as they are expressed in facial expressions, voice tone, or cultural artifacts. A person who sees the fleeting expression of fear in the face of another understands much more about that person's emotions andthoughts than someone who misses such a signal.

The second dimension of emotional intelligence concerns emotional facilitation of cognitive activities. Emotions are complex organizations of the various psychological subsystems—physiological, experiential, cognitive, and motivational. Emotions enter the cognitive system both as cognized feelings, as is the case when someone thinks, "I am a little sad now," and as altered cognitions, as when a sad person thinks, "I am no good." The emotional facilitation of thought focuses on how emotion affects the cognitive system and, as such, can be harnessed for more effective problem solving, reasoning, decision making, and creative endeavors. Of course, cognition can be disrupted by emotions, such as anxiety and fear, but emotions also can prioritize the cognitive system to attend to what is important (Easterbrook, 1959; Mandler, 1975; Simon, 1982), and even to focus on what it does best in a given mood (e.g., Palfai & Salovey, 1993; Schwarz, 1990).

Emotions also change cognitions, making them positive when a person is happy and negative when a person is sad (e.g., Forgas, 1995; Mayer, Gaschke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992;
Salovey & Birnbaum, 1989; Singer & Salovey, 1988). These changes force the cognitive system to view things from different perspectives, for example, alternating between skeptical and accepting. The advantage of such alterations to thought is fairly apparent. When one's point of view shifts between

skeptical and accepting, the individual can appreciate multiple vantage points and, as a consequence, think about a problem more deeply and creatively (e.g., Mayer, 1986; Mayer & Hanson, 1995). It is just such an effect that may lead people with mood swings toward greater creativity (Goodwin & Jamison, 1990; see Simonton, this volume).

The third dimension involves understanding emotion. Emotions form a rich and complexly interrelated symbol set. The most fundamental competency at this level concerns the ability to label emotions with words and to recognize the relationships among exemplars of the affective lexicon. The emotionally intelligent individual is able to recognize that the terms used to describe emotions are arranged into families and that groups of emotion terms form fuzzy sets
(Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). Perhaps more important, the relations among these terms are deduced—that annoyance and irritation can lead to rage if the provocative stimulus is not eliminated, or that envy often is experienced in contexts that also evoke jealousy (Salovey & Rodin, 1986, 1989). The person who is able to understand emotions—their meanings, how they blend together, how they progress over time—is truly blessed with the capacity to understand important aspects of human nature and interpersonal relationships.

Partly as a consequence of various popularizations, and partly as a consequence of societal pressures to regulate emotions, many people primarily identify emotional intelligence with its fourth branch, emotional management (sometimes referred to as emotional regulation). They hope emotional intelligence will be a way of getting rid of troublesome emotions or emotional leakages into human relations and rather, to control emotions. Although this is one possible outcome of the fourth branch, optimal levels of emotional regulation may be moderate ones; attempts to minimize or eliminate emotion completely may stifle emotional intelligence. Similarly, the regulation of emotion in other people is less likely to involve the suppressing of others' emotions but rather the harnessing of them, as when a persuasive speaker is said to "move" his or her audience.

Individuals use a broad range of techniques to regulate their moods. Thayer, Newman, and McClain (1994) believe that physical exercise is the single most effective strategy for changing a bad mood, among those under one's own control. Other commonly reported mood regulation strategies include listening to music, social interaction, and cognitive self-management (e.g., giving oneself a "pep talk"). Pleasant distractions (errands, hobbies, fun activities, shopping, reading, and writing) also are effective. Less effective (and, at times, counterproductive) strategies include passive mood management (e.g., television viewing, caffeine, food, and sleep), direct tension reduction (e.g., drugs, alcohol, and sex), spending time alone, and avoiding the person or thing that caused a bad mood. In general, the most successful regulation methods involve expenditure of energy; active mood management techniques that combine relaxation, stress management, cognitive effort, and exercise may be the most effective strategies for changing bad moods (reviewed by Thayer et al., 1994). Central to emotional self-regulation is the ability to reflect upon and manage one's emotions; emotional disclosure provides one means of doing so. Pennebaker (1989, 1993, 1997) has studied the effects of disclosure extensively and finds that the act of disclosing emotional experiences in writing improves individuals' subsequent physical and mental health.

b) EXPERIENCE OF HAPPINESS AND THE ROLE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Happiness is a positive emotional state that is subjectively defined by each person. The term subjective well-being often is used as a synonym for happiness in the psychology literature. Subjective well-being involves the subjective evaluation of one's current status in the world. More specifically, Deiner (2000) defines subjective well-being as a combination of positive affect (in the absence of negative affect) and general life satisfaction (i.e., subjective appreciation of life rewards.

Buddha left home in search of a more meaningful existence and ultimately found enlightenment, a sense of peace, and happiness. Aristotle believed that eudaimonia (human flourishing associated with living a life of virtue), or happiness based on a lifelong pursuit of meaningful, developmental goals (i.e.,

'doing what is worth doing'), was the key to the good life. America's founders reasoned that the pursuit of happiness was just as important as our inalienable rights of life and liberty. Theories of happiness have been divided into three types: (1) need/goal satisfaction theories, (2) process/activity theories, and (3) genetic/personality predisposition (Diener et al., 2002).

In regard to need/goal satisfaction theories, the leaders of particular schools of psychotherapy proffered these ideas about happiness. For example, psychoanalytic and humanistic theorists (Sigmund Freud and Abraham Maslow, respectively) suggested that the reduction of tension or the satisfaction of needs leads to happiness. In short, it was theorized that we are happy because we have reached our goals. Such 'happiness as satisfaction' makes happiness a target of our psychological pursuits.

In the process/activity camp, theorists posit that engaging in particular life activities generates happiness. For example, Mike Csikszentmihalyi, who was one of the first 20th-century theorists to examine process/activity conceptualizations of happiness, proposed that people who experience flow (engagement in interesting activities that match or challenge task-related skills) in daily life tend to very happy. Indeed, Csikszentmihalyi's work suggests that engagement in activity produces happiness. Other process/activity theorists have emphasized how the process of pursuing goals generates energy and happiness. This pursuit of happiness perspective mirrors America's founders' promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Those who emphasize the genetic and personality predisposition theories of happiness (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Watson, 2000) tend to see happiness as stable, where as theorists in the happiness- as-satisfaction and process/activity camps view it as changing with life conditions. On this latter point, Costa and McCrae (1988) found that happiness changed little over a 6-year period, there by lending credence to theories of personality-based or biologically determined happiness. Demonstrating this link between happiness and personality, Lucas and Fujita (2000) showed that extraversion and neuroticism, two of the big five factors of personality, were closely related to the characteristics of happiness.

Subjective well-being as a synonym for happiness:

Building on a utilitarian tradition and the tenets of hedonic psychology, Diener (2000) considers well-being to be the subjective evaluation of one's current status in the world. More specifically, well-being involves our experience of pleasure and our appreciation of life's rewards. Given this view, Diener defines subjective well-being as a combination of positive affect (in the absence of negative affect) and general life satisfaction. Furthermore, he uses the subjective well-being as a synonym for happiness. Subjective well-being emphasizes people's reports of their life experiences.

Happiness + Meaning = Well-being

Psychologists who support the hedonic perspective view subjective well-being and happiness as synonymous. Alternatively, the scholars whose ideas about well-being are more consistent with Aristotle's views on eudaimonia believe that happiness and well-being are not synonymous. In this latter perspective, eudaimonia is comprised of happiness and meaning. Stated in simple formula, well-being = happiness + meaning. In order to subscribe to this latter view of well-being, one must understand virtue and the social implications of daily behavior. Furthermore, this view requires that those who seek well-being be authentic and live according to their real needs and desired goals. Thus, living a eudaimonic life goes beyond experiencing ''things pleasurable'', and it embraces flourishing as the goal in all our actions. Both hedonistic and eudaimonic versions of happiness have influenced the 21st century definitions.

21st Century Definitions of Happiness

Modern western psychology has focused primarily on a postmaterialistic view of happiness (Diener et al., 2002) that emphasizes pleasure, satisfaction, and life meaning. Indeed, the type of happiness addressed in much today's popular literature emphasizes hedonics, meaning, and authenticity. For example, Seligman (2002) suggests that a pleasant and meaningful life can be built on the happiness that results from using our psychological strengths.

Describing a new model of happiness, Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) propose that ‘‘a person’s chronic happiness level is governed by three major factors: a genetically determined set point for happiness, happiness-relevant circumstantial factors, and happiness-relevant activities and practices’’. Lyubomirsky and colleagues’ ‘‘architecture of sustainable happiness’’ incorporates what is known about the genetic components of happiness, the circumstantial/demographic determinants of happiness, and the complex process of intentional human change. Based on past research, which they summarize, Lyubomrisky et al. propose that genetics accounts for 50% of population variance for happiness, where as life circumstances (both good and bad) and intentional activity (attempts at healthy living and positive change) account for 10% and 40% of the population variance for happiness, respectively. This model of happiness acknowledges the components of happiness that can’t be changed, but it also leaves room for volition and self-generated goals that lead to the attainment of pleasure, meaning and good health.

CIRCUMSTANCES AND HAPPINESS

A range of circumstances, many of which are environmental, influence happiness and well-being (Diener et al., 2009). These include geographical location, culture, religion and spirituality, life events, wealth, marital status, social support, education, work, recreation, age, gender, and health. Altogether these circumstantial variables account for about 10% of the variance in overall happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Geographical location and the physical environment

Broadly speaking more pleasant physical environments are moderately associated with happiness. Strong positive feelings are associated with being in natural rather than artificial environments. People report positive feelings in geographical locations where there are vegetations, water, and panoramic views (Ulrich et al., 1991). Evolutionary factors probably contribute to preferences for these types of geographical locations (Buss, 2000). Such environments are both safe and fertile.

Good weather induces positive moods. When the sun is shining, when it’s warm but not too warm, and when there is low humidity people report more positive moods (Brereton et al., 2008). However, people do adapt to unfavorable weather conditions, and across nations there is no correlation between the climate and national happiness ratings. Moderate correlations have been found between the quality of housing and life satisfaction. Indicators of the quality of housing include geographical location, rooms per person, room size, and availability of heating (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

Proximity to or distance from amenities also influence well-being. Being near an airport (but not near enough to suffer noise pollution) or the coast is associated with increased well-being, while being near major roads or a land-fill waste site is associated with reduced well-being (Brereton et al., 2008). Having to commute long distances to work, living in areas with limited access to parks and green spaces, noise, air pollution all diminish well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Music has been shown in surveys and mood-induction experiments to induce short-term positive mood states and to reduce aggression (Argyle, 2001). However, there is no evidence that music leads to enduring positive mood changes or life satisfaction.

Culture

In a series of studies involving hundreds of thousands of respondents from over 90 countries, Professor Ed Diener and his team have consistently found that specific cultural and sociopolitical factors play an important role in determining happiness. There is an association between subjective well-being and living in an affluent stable democracy devoid of political oppression and military conflict. Cultures in which there is social equality have higher mean levels of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is greater in individualist cultures than in collectivist cultures. Happiness is also associated with important features of government institutions. Subjective well-being is higher in welfare states, in countries in which public institutions run efficiently, and in which there are satisfactory relationships between citizens and members of the bureaucracy.

Religion and spirituality

Moderate correlations have been found between happiness and involvement in religious activity in North American studies (Myers, 2000). In meta-analyses and reviews, positive correlations have been found between religiosity and mental health (Hackney & Sanders, 2003), Spirituality and quality of life (Sawatzkey et al., 2005), and positive religious cooping and psychological adjustment (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). However, the relationship between religious faith and practices on the one hand, and well-being on the other, is not simple. It is not always the case that more is better. For example, the phenomenon of suicide bombing shows that extreme religious fundamentalism may be hazardous. Also many non-religious humanists such as the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and the British novelist Sir Terry Pratchett lived very fulfilling lives. In a wide ranging review of empirical studies of religion and well-being, Professor Kenneth Pargament (2002) concluded that well-being is associated with religion that is internalized, intrinsically motivated and based on a secure relationship with God and not with religion that is imposed, and reflective of a tenuous relationship with God and the world. Religion is particularly helpful to socially marginalized and disadvantaged groups, and is especially valuable in stressful situations. The impact of religion on well-being depends upon the degree to which it is integrated in the individual's life.

Life events

Positive and negative life events have short-term effects on well-being, but in many cases there are not enduring. Brickman and Campbell (1971) coined the term 'hedonic treadmill' to describe the process of rapid adaptation whereby people react strongly to both positive and negative recent life events, with sharp increases or decreases in happiness, but in most instances rapidly return to their happiness set-point in a matter of weeks or months. Subsequent research has shown that people can adapt to significant negative life events, including imprisonment and disability, and positive life events, such as increases in income (Frederick & Lowenstein, 1999). However, Ed Diener's team found that people do not fully adapt to the death of a spouse, divorce, or unemployment.

Wealth

Wealth confers many benefits on people. Compared with poor people, wealthy people are healthier, live longer, have fewer stressful life events, are less likely to drop out of education, have teenage pregnancies, be victims of violent crime and tend to be given lighter prison sentences for the same crimes. For people who enjoy their work, earning money is a pleasant activity. In most societies wealth gives people higher social status and greater control over many aspects of their lives. Wealth also allows people to do pleasurable things such as helping others, shopping, and preferred leisure activities. Despite these very significant benefits associated with material wealth, a consistent finding is that within affluent industrialized nations, such as in the USA and the UK, the correlation between wealth and happiness or subjective well-being is quite small ($r < 0.2$). In poor countries, where the overall risk of unhappiness is greater, the correlation between wealth and happiness is greater than in rich nations. In economically developed countries, over the past few decades economic growth has not been accompanied by a rise in happiness. Unless they are very rich, people who strive for wealth are very less happy than those who aspire to non-material goals and values. This may be because the process and outcome of accumulating money may not be conducive to meeting social and psychological needs that enhance happiness once basic physical needs have been met. However, even in affluent societies, the very rich are happier than those with moderate incomes.

Marriage

Married people are happier than unmarried people, be they divorced, separated, or never married (Myers, 2000). However, the least happy of all are people trapped in unhappy marriages. The happiness gap between married and unmarried women is the same as that for men. So both men and women reap the same benefits in terms of personal happiness from marriage. There are two explanations for the link

between happiness and marriage: the selection and protection hypotheses. The selection hypothesis is that more happy people get married while more unhappy do not because happy people are more attractive as marital partners than unhappy people. The protection hypothesis is that marriage confers a range of benefits on people that make them happy. Marriage provides psychological and physical intimacy, a context within which to have children and build a home, a social role as a spouse and parent, and a context within which to affirm identity and create posterity.

There is some evidence to support the view that more happy people form satisfying marriages. In a 17-year German longitudinal study involving over 15,000 cases, Stutzer and Frey (2006) found that those who got married were initially happier than those who remained single, and those who got divorced were not only less happy during marriage but also less happy before they got married. A range of factors, besides happiness, have been identified as significant in the formation of stable and satisfying marriages. These include;

1. Personal characteristics, strengths, and vulnerabilities;
2. The couple's interaction style; and
3. The stresses and supports in the couple's wider social context (Bradbury & Karney, 2004).

   With regard to personal characteristics, partners who have the capacity to regulate anger and negative affect show better marital adjustment because they do not let small disagreements snowball into big aggressive conflicts. Partners similar in personality, ability, physical attractiveness, attitudes, interests, values, and politics are more likely to experience marital satisfaction, remain married, avoid conflict and infidelity, and provide their children with a stable home environment (Buss, 2000). This may be because it is easier to empathize with people similar to ourselves and so partners similar to ourselves feel understood by us more easily. Also, where there is little difference between our 'mate value' and that of our partner, there is less likelihood of infidelity. With regard to interactional style, marriages in which couples support and appreciate each other, express positive emotions and affection especially during conflicts, communicate respectfully and clearly, and forgive each other's faults have higher levels of marital satisfaction. With regard to stresses and supports, couples who have strong social support networks and low levels of stressful demands on them have greater marital satisfaction than those with stress and low support.

Social support, kinship and friendship

Close socially supportive relationships within nuclear and extended families, and between members of families and wider social networks, are associated with greater well-being, health, longevity, and adjustment (Taylor, 2007). Distinctions are made between instrumental social support (such as helping to solve a problem) and emotional social support (such as offering empathy and reassurance). Distinctions are also made between perceived and received social support. Received social support refers to the support obtained in the past, where as perceived social support refers to help anticipated in times of need. Socially supportive relationship with family and friends enhance well-being by meeting people's needs for affiliation and belonging, by helping people to regulate and soothe negative affect when faced with stressful demands, by helping people solve problems that cannot be solved in isolation, by giving people hope that they will be able to face future challenges because they have help available to them, and by creating a context within which people can be generous and altruistic towards others.

From an evolutionary perspective we are 'hard-wired' to derive happiness from contact with our kinship or family network (Buss, 2007). There are certain things that we can do to enhance the benefits of kinship on our experience of happiness. Keep in regular contact with members of your family. Plan your life style to allow you to maintain closer physical contact with your family. This planning refers to both stages of your yearly cycle and the longer time frame of your life cycle. Maintaining contact with family members increases social support and this is not only brings happiness but also improved immune system

functioning and reactivity to stress (Dickerson & Zoccola, 2009). Maintaining contact with the extended family network reduces the chances of domestic violence and child abuse, because it pierces the veil of privacy that goes with being an isolated nuclear family as common in cases of domestic violence.

In Diener and Seligman's (2002) seminal study of 'very happy people', they found that the most distinctive attribute of the happiest 10% of a group of 222 college students was their rich and fulfilling social life. They spent a significant amount of their time socializing with friends and were rated by themselves and their friends at being outstanding in making and maintaining close friendships. These happy students were probably more often selected as friends and confidants, because they were more attractive companions than miserable people. However, engaging in friendships also enhanced their sense of happiness by providing them with social support.

Education

Education level is positively correlated with happiness, socioeconomic status, health and longevity (Michalos, 2008). The relationship between education and subjective well-being is particularly strong in poorer underdeveloped countries. This may be because in underdeveloped countries education confers greater differential benefits. In these countries, people with little education may not even be able to have their basic physical needs met, whereas those with education may earn sufficient money to have their needs for food and shelter adequately met. In contrast, in developed countries, in most instances, basic needs are met for even the poorly educated.

Happiness with being in school (school satisfaction) is associated with personal characteristics of pupils and contextual characteristics of schools (Huebner et al., 2009). Pupils who report high school satisfaction have high academic self-efficacy, hope, intrinsic motivation, social competence, and engage in more extra-curricular activities. In contrast, those with low school satisfaction have high levels of anxiety, depression, drug misuse, mental health problems, interpersonal difficulties, and an external locus of control. Greater school satisfaction is experienced in schools where teachers promote choice and autonomy, and positive peer relationships. They do this within a predictable classroom structure with clear rules that are consistently enforced, with appropriate behavior being praised. School satisfaction is also associated with a teaching style that promotes active rather than passive learning on a group and individual basis, and helps pupils work towards goals that support their future academic aspirations. A variety of curricula and instructional strategies have been developed to foster characteristics central to positive psychology in school children, including character strengths, flow, hope, optimism, self-regulation, positive self-concepts, mastery, creativity, empathy, and positive peer relationships (Gilman et al., 2009).

Work

Employment status is related to happiness, with employed people being happier than those who are unemployed, and people in professional and skilled jobs being happier than those in unskilled jobs (Argyle, 2001). In a meta-analysis of over 100 studies, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found that unemployed individuals had lower psychological and physical well-being than their employed counter parts. In a German 15-year longitudinal study involving over 24,000 cases, Lucas et al. (2004) found that unemployment led to severe and significant decreases in well-being and that even years after losing their jobs, people did not return to the level of well-being they enjoyed before becoming unemployed. They concluded that unemployment can alter the happiness set-point. However, not all unemployed people are equally unhappy. Those with good health, little financial pressure, good social support, and a weaker desire to be in a job have been found to be happier.

Job satisfaction and happiness are moderately correlated at about $r = 0.4$ (Diener et al., 1999). This may be because work can potentially provide an optimal level of stimulation that people find pleasurable, an opportunity to fulfill the drive for curiosity and skills development, a social support network, and a sense of identity and purpose. Peter Warr (2007) has shown that in jobs that are satisfying there is a good person-environment fit and such jobs have distinctive characteristics. People in such jobs are asked to

fulfill functions and work in environments that are suited to their skills, talents, and preferences. In such jobs they have considerable autonomy or decisional discretion about how they fulfill their work, rather than being tightly constrained by frequent, salient, detailed directives from superiors. People tend to be more satisfied in jobs that entail completing intrinsically rewarding work tasks in which they use well-developed skills and work that brings social benefits. Such jobs also involve considerable task variety. Other factors associated with job satisfaction include a clear role definition, supportive supervision, opportunities for interpersonal contact with colleagues, a socially valued position, physical safety, financial security, job security, opportunities for career progression, and just and ethical relationships within the workplace and between the organization and wider community (Warr, 2007). It has already been noted that happy people are more productive, so the link between happiness and productivity is bi-directional. Certain types of work situations facilitate happiness and happiness in turn facilitates greater productivity.

Recreation

Rest, relaxation, good food, and leisure activities all have positive short-term effects on happiness (Argyle, 2001). During holiday periods people report greater positive moods and less irritability. Membership of leisure and sports groups, notably those that involve dancing, music, volunteer charity work, or all-consuming sports have been found in surveys to be conducive to higher ratings of well-being. Membership of such leisure groups probably leads to increased well-being because it involves interaction with others, often within the context of a min-culture that has its own ethos, values and a system for structuring time, activity, and social relationships. Leisure groups that involve music, in addition to the foregoing, reap all the positive benefits of music for the induction of positive moods. Thus, group-based leisure activities may increase happiness by meeting certain needs, such as the need for affiliation and altruism; the need for autonomous execution of skilled activity; the need for excitement and the need for competition and achievement. The positive impact of recreation on well-being has led to the development of the therapeutic recreation movement in which recreation is used in clinical contexts to foster well-being in people with physical and mental health problems and disabilities (Carruthers & Hood, 2007).

Age and gender

In an extensive review of international surveys that assessed the association between self-reported happiness and demographic characteristics, Blanchflower (2009) concluded that well-being is higher among women, and among the old and the young. Across the life cycle, happiness follows a 'U'-shaped trajectory. Data from over half a million randomly sampled Americans and West Europeans and other international samples show that a typical individual's happiness reaches its minimum level in middle age, between the late 30s and early 50s. From youth to middle age happiness declines and from middle age to old age it increases. More women and young people report extreme happiness and extreme misery compared with men and older people (Diener et al., 1999).

Health

While subjective ratings of personal health correlate with happiness, objective health ratings made by physicians do not except where people are severely disabled (Diener et al., 1999). So, except in extreme circumstances, objective health status probably has little impact on overall happiness. On the other hand, subjective ratings of personal health that do affect happiness are influenced more by personality traits, such as neuroticism, and coping strategies such as denial or reframing, than by objective physical health. The immune system of happy people work more effectively than those of unhappy people and this in turn leads them to become ill less frequently, to show decreased symptoms and pain, and to show increased longevity (Cohen & Pressman, 2006).

c) HOPE AND OPTIMISM

Hope is referred as the goal directed thinking in which a person has the perceived capacity to find routes to desired goals and the requisite motivations to use those routes. Hope is not genetically

determined but an entirely learned, deliberate way of thinking. Hope can be defined in cognitive terms as appropriate when goals are (1) reasonably attainable (i.e., an intermediate level of difficulty), (2) under control, (3) viewed as important, and (4) acceptable at social and moral levels (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990). Breznitz (1986) proposed five metaphors to capture the operations of hope in response to stressors, with hope as a protected area, a bridge, an intention, performance, and an end in itself. He also cautioned that hope may be an illusion akin to denial.

Hope can be defined as 'the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes' and posed dialectics between hope and other motives, one of the strongest and most important being trust/hope versus mistrust, which is the infant's first task (Erikson, 1964). Another broad dialectic, according to Erikson, pertains to the generativity of hope versus stagnation. For Gottschalk (1974), hope involves positive expectancies about specific favorable outcomes, and it impels a person to move through psychological problems. Hope has been conceptualized by Snyder (1994) as involving two main components: the ability to plan pathways to desired goals despite obstacles, and agency or motivation to use these pathways. Hope is the sum of these two components. In any situation where a valued goal is pursued, the hopeful goal-directed behavior will be determined by the interaction of:

1. The degree to which the outcome or goal is valued;
2. Thoughts about possible pathways to the goals and related expectations about how effective these will be in achieving the outcome or goal; and
3. The thoughts about personal agency and how effective one will be in following paths to goals.

All three of these factors will be dependent upon thoughts brought to the situation based on past experience and development in two areas:

1. Thoughts about pathways to goals based on developmental lessons concerning correlations and causality; and
2. Thoughts about agency based on developmental lessons about the self as author of causal chains of events.

Development of hope

Snyder (2000) suggests that hope develops in a clearly defined way over the course of infancy, childhood and adolescence. By the end of the first year of life, object constancy and cause and effect schemes allow infants to have anticipatory thoughts about pathways to goals. Pointing skills that are well developed by the end of the first year allow infants to indicate what their goals are. In the second year, infants learn that they can instigate goal-directed activities to follow pathways to desired goals. The idea of self as an agent evolves during this period. During the second year, one of the most important hope related skills learned is the idea that pathways around barriers may be planned and actively followed. This process of encountering barriers, planning ways around them, and then actively executing these plans is central to the genesis of hope. Children who are securely attached to their parents or caregivers and are provided with sufficient social support to cope with adversity develop resilience and hope.

During the preschool period from 3 to 6 years, the rapid development of language, preoperational intuitive thinking, interest in storytelling, and predictable routines, allows for the further growth of hopeful-pathway planning in the face of barriers and obstacles. Physical development allows for the growth of sophisticated skills for putting plans into action. As the ability to empathize with others begins to develop towards the end of the preschool years, children become aware that planning and pursuing pathways towards valued goals may sometimes help and sometimes hinder others to pursue their valued goals. The development of perspective taking allows preschoolers to include the wishes of others in their plans.

In middle childhood and pre-adolescence there is a rapid growth in logical rather than intuitive thinking skills, memory skills, reading skills, and advanced social perspective-taking skills. These allow for increasingly sophisticated hopeful planning and pursuing pathways towards valued goals, and doing so

within a social context mindful of the wishes of their parents, siblings, peers, and teachers. In adolescence, youngsters develop abstract reasoning skills. These skills facilitate the management of complex issues including increasing autonomy from parents; forming exclusive intimate relationships; and developing career plans. These challenges provide opportunities for hopeful planning and hopeful pursuit of plans despite setbacks and barriers.

Children who develop a hopeful disposition typically have parents who serve as hopeful role models and who coach them in developing and executing plans to circumvent barriers to valued goals. These children have secure attachment to their parents who provide them with a warm and structured family environment in which rules are consistently and predictably applied and conflict is managed in a predictable and fair way.

The neurobiology of hope

Although Snyder and colleagues have held that hope is a learned mental set, this does not preclude the idea that the operations of hopeful thinking have neurobiological underpinnings, especially as related to goal-directed behaviors. Brain researchers now believe that what happens in the body can affect the brain, and what happens in the brain can affect the body. Hope, purpose, and determination are not merely mental states. They have electrochemical connections that play a large part in the workings of the immune system and, indeed, in the entire economy of the total human organism (Cousins, 1991).

One exiting new idea here is that goal-directed actions are guided by opposing control processes in the central nervous system. According to Pickering and Gray (1999), these processes are regulated by the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) and the behavioral activation system (BAS). The BIS is thought to be responsive to punishment, and it signals the organism to stop, where as BAS is governed by rewards, and it sends the message to go forward.

Collective hope

Hope researchers have expanded their construct to explore what is called ‘collective hope’. Simply put, collective hope reflects the level of goal-directed thinking of a large group of people. Often, such collective hope is operative when several people join together to tackle a goal that would be impossible for any one person. Snyder and Feldman (2000) have applied the notion of collective hope more generally to the topics of disarmament, preservation of environmental resources, health insurance, and government.

OPTIMISM

Psychologists have viewed optimism/ pessimism primarily as an individual difference variable describing people’s general positive or negative expectations about the future. People vary in their degree of optimism/pessimism and these differences are potentially important to a wide assortment of life activities and choices. There are two major approaches to optimism in psychological research: optimism as an individual disposition or trait and optimism as an explanatory style describing how people characteristically interpret the causes of bad events in their lives.

DISPOSITIONAL OPTIMISM

Scheier and Carver (1992) define dispositional optimism as a global expectation that the future will bring a bounty of good things and scarcity of bad things. Pessimism is an opposite expectation – that the future will have more bad than good outcomes. As a general expectation, applicable to many areas of life, optimists are confident that they can achieve their goals, while pessimists doubt their ability. Dispositional optimism is a global expectation that more good things than bad will happen in the future. Optimistic people, in the face of difficulties, continue to pursue their valued goals and regulate themselves and their personal states using effective coping strategies so that they are likely to achieve their goals (Carver et al., 2010).

Dispositional optimism is fairly stable trait. It is about 25% heritable. Family environments characterized by parental warmth and financial security are associated with the development of optimism. Optimists expect good things to occur in life, even when times are hard. Pessimists expect the worst, in good times and bad. Optimists and pessimists have been shown to respond differently to adversity. Optimists' positive expectations are associated with greater well-being, even in the face of adversity. In contrast, pessimists respond to adversity with negative feelings. Optimists and pessimists cope with stress and adversity differently. Optimists tend to use problem-focused coping strategies and do as much as possible to resolve solvable stress related problems. Pessimists, in contrast, tend to use avoidant coping strategies that psychologically distance them from stress related problems. Optimists are more likely to persist with problem solving, while pessimists are more likely to give up trying, especially if things remain challenging.

Optimists tend to be healthier than pessimists. Optimists heal faster and when they have chronic diseases they experience slower disease progression. In the world of education and work, optimists' pro-active problem focused approach to life leads them to persist with educational efforts more than pessimists and later reap the benefits of higher incomes associated with greater educational achievement. Optimists tend to make and maintain social networks and intimate relationships more effectively than pessimists, probably because they are easier for people to like and they work harder at their relationships because they expect them to be good.

OPTIMISTIC EXPLANATORY STYLE/ LEARNED OPTIMISM

Seligman and Peterson and their colleagues have conceptualized optimism as an explanatory style, rather than a broad personality trait which can be defined as people's characteristic way of explaining negative events. Optimistic people, according to this perspective, explain negative events or experiences by attributing the cause of these to external, transient, specific factors such as the prevailing circumstances. In contrast, pessimists explain negative events or experiences by attributing their cause to internal, stable global factors such as being a personal failure. Stable causes are those that are enduring and unlikely to change in the future. Global refers to general causes that affect almost everything about a person's life, and internal causes are those stemming from the traits and beliefs of the individual rather than external circumstances.

HOW OPTIMISM WORKS

1. **Optimism is a source of motivation:** it is much easier to initiate action when we believe our actions will lead to positive outcomes. This particularly important when face obstacles that may tax our persistence. In the face of disappointments, optimism energizes continued action, while pessimism may lead to giving up. The explanatory style of optimists offers one reason for these motivational benefits. By interpreting bad events as temporary and limited to specific situations, optimists protect themselves from strong negative emotional reactions that might undermine confidence and interfere with effective coping.
2. **Optimism is connected with more effective coping:** optimists are better at dealing with stress. They are more likely than pessimists to use active coping strategies aimed at confronting and solving problems.
3. **Optimists' flexibility in the use of different coping approaches:** optimists distinguish between controllable and uncontrollable life stressors and adjust their coping strategies appropriately.
4. **An optimistic attitude contributes to more frequent experiencing of positive affect:** positive emotions contribute to more creative problem-solving, offset the effects of negative emotions, enhance resilience in the face of distress, and increase the likelihood of social support from others.

DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIMISM

The development of optimism is determined by parental mental health, the type of role modeling offered by parents and the degree to which parents encourage and reward optimism (Abramson *et al.*, 2000; Gillham, 2000; Seligman, 1998). Optimists are more likely to come from families in which neither parent had depression. Parents of optimists are good role models for using an optimistic explanatory style, attributing success to internal, global, stable factors and failures to external, specific, transitory factors. Optimists come from families where their parents are understanding of their failures and attribute them to external rather than internal factors. Where youngsters come from families that have experienced major traumas (such as unemployment and poverty), they develop optimism if their families cope and recover from adversity. Parents of optimists encourage their children to deal with setbacks in an optimistic way and differentially reinforce optimism and persistence. Pessimists are more likely to come from families in which parents are depressed, are role models for a pessimistic explanatory style, and differentially reinforce the development of pessimistic explanatory style. Where parents criticize children and attribute their failures to internal, global stable factors the children are more likely to grow up to be pessimists. Child abuse and neglect also renders children vulnerable to developing a pessimistic explanatory style and depression. Optimism is also related to the ability to delay gratification and to forgo short-term gains in order to achieve long-term goals, probably because optimistic people can have faith that long term goals are achievable.

Prospective and retrospective studies have shown that individuals with an optimistic explanatory style are less likely to develop physical ill-health, depression or suicidality when they face major stressful life events than individuals with a pessimistic explanatory style. In contrast, pessimists who face major stressful life events as children (such as chronic parental conflict, divorce or maternal bereavement) are more likely to develop depression. This can be counteracted if they have one good socially supportive relationship. Or it can be exacerbated and maintained if their depression leads them to fail at school where they are criticized, with critical internal, global, stable attributions being made for their failure.

In adulthood optimism is associated with better academic achievement, sport performance, occupational adjustment and family life (Seligman, 1998; Gillham, 2000). Optimism predicts better performance at individual and team sports (Seligman *et al.*, 1988). Optimism predicts success in various occupations such as sales. Optimism within Marriage has been found to be associated with higher rates of positive interactions and to predict long-term marital satisfaction (Fincham, 2000). Optimism also has an important impact on the way people deal with bereavement and loss. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema (2000) found that bereaved optimists tended to use coping strategies such as: reappraisal of the loss in positive terms; problem solving by seeking social support; and distraction through involvement in hobbies and exercise. Pessimists, in contrast, tended to use coping strategies such as denial or distraction through excessive drinking.

Attributional retraining

Seligman (1998) has developed programs to help adults and children change their explanatory style from pessimism to optimism. The programs are based on the cognitive therapy models developed by Dr Aaron T.Beck (1976) and Dr Albert Ellis (Ellis and Harper, 1975). In these programs participants learn to monitor and analyze mood-altering situations and then to modify their pessimistic beliefs so that their explanatory style becomes more optimistic.

In the first part of these programs participants learn to monitor mood changes associated with encountering adversity. In each adverse situation they conduct an ABC analysis which involves specifying the adversity, the beliefs and thoughts that occurred when the adversity was encountered, and the consequent mood changes.

Three sets of skills for changing pessimistic explanations for adversity are practised once ABC analysis has been mastered. These include distraction, distancing and disputation. Distraction involves doing something to change the focus of attention and stop the preoccupation with internal pessimistic explanations for adversity. Distancing involves reminding ourselves that pessimistic explanations of adversity are only one possible interpretation of the situation, not true facts. While distraction is a strategy for 'turning off' pessimistic thinking, distancing is a strategy for 'turning down' their impact on mood by recognizing that beliefs are not facts, they are just one 'spin' on the situation. Distancing sets the stage for disputation. Disputation is the process of carrying on an internal dialogue, the goal of which is to show that there is an equally valid or more valid optimistic explanation for the adversity. When disputing pessimistic explanations we ask four questions that centre on evidence, alternatives, implications and usefulness.

Armed with ABC analysis skills and distraction, distancing and disputation skills, the next step is to put them together in ABCDE practice. ABCDE stands for Adversity, Beliefs, and Consequent mood changes, Disputation and Energisation.

THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF OPTIMISM

Recent brain imaging studies have suggested that specific brain regions are associated with optimism. Dr. Tali Sharot and colleagues (2007) took functional magnetic resonance imaging scans of the brains of 15 young adults while they thought of positive and negative future events such as the end of a romantic relationship or winning an award in the past and in the future. Participants rated their experiences for vividness, emotional valence, and other variables, and completed dispositional optimism scales. Enhanced activation in the amygdale and in the rostral anterior cingulate cortex occurred when participants were imagining positive future events relative to negative ones. These two regions have been found to show irregularities in depression, which has been related to pessimism. Activity in one of these areas – the rostral anterior cingulate cortex – was correlated with trait optimism.

Investigators have reported that pessimism and depression are related to abnormal limbic system functioning as well as to dysfunctional operations of the lateral prefrontal cortex and the paralimbic system. Indeed, depression appears to be linked to deficiencies in neurotransmitters (Liddle, 2001). Thus, antidepressant medications aim to increase the effective operation of these neurotransmitters. Likewise, research shows that serotonergic cells located in thee dorsal raphe nucleus are reactive to perceived control. Furthermore, there is predictable, control-induced release of serotonin in the amygdala. Depression also has been associated with depleted endorphin secretion and defective immune functioning (Peterson, 2000).

POSITIVE ILLUSIONS

In 'Future of an illusion' Freud (1928) argued that the optimistic belief in a benevolent father-like God who would rewards us in the afterlife if we controlled our aggressive and sexual instincts was an illusion essential for civilization. Without this illusion, people would be tempted to act out their aggressive and sexual instincts. However, this optimistic illusion came at a price. It entailed denial of the reality of sexual and aggressive instincts. Through the process of psychoanalysis, people could attain insight into the various defences, neurotic compromises, and optimistic illusions they used to balance their need to fulfill sexual and aggressive impulses with their need to behave in a socially acceptable way. The goal of analysis was to attain a level of psychological maturity, where reality could be clearly perceived and where optimistic illusions could be discarded.

Evidence suggests that most people share four positive illusions. First, people have a self-serving view of themselves as better than average compared to other people. We tend to think we are more competent and better liked than other people and describe ourselves primarily in positive terms. Second, people are 'unrealistically' optimistic and see a rosy future for themselves in which many good things and

few bad things will happen. Third, most of us exaggerate the amount of control we have over our lives. Fourth, people often show a self-serving bias in attributing their failures to external circumstances, rather than to personal factors such as lack of ability or effort. This bias helps maintain a positive self-image in the face of negative and potentially self-deflating events. These beliefs are considered illusions because they are not literally true. Not everyone can be better than average and have a rosy future, and there are limits to our control over life events. However, these beliefs are not so far-removed from reality that they constitute delusional or irrational thinking that would interfere with a healthy life. In fact, quite the opposite. Positive illusions are mild distortions in how we view life and ourselves that promote health, happiness, and coping with stress and trauma.

Rather than dramatic departure from reality, positive illusions are consistent, modest biases that put a positive spin on our view of the world. Feedback from the environment and especially other people keep us from going to extremes. Positive illusions that are too extreme are likely to be brought back to reality, unless we stick our head in the sand and ignore the reality checks available to us.

Professor Shelly Taylor (1989) at the University of UCLA, in her book *Positive Illusions*, summarized research which showed that most people, especially healthy people, are biased towards viewing themselves in an optimistic way and that positive illusions are associated with greater health and well-being. Positive illusions have been found to lead to greater subjective well-being, greater relationship satisfaction, a greater capacity to adjust to adversity, and greater persistence on work related tasks, and provided that the tasks are not overly difficult, to greater work productivity (Marshall & Brown, 2008). Positive illusions, in many cases, also lead to better health as indexed by self-reports and also by objective indices such as immune function, blood pressure, disease progression, and mortality (Segerstrom & Roach, 2008).

Human thought is distinguished by a robust positive bias. That is, our minds are designed to think in positive rather than realistic or negative ways. Most people view themselves, the world and the future in positive terms. In many carefully designed experiments in social psychology Taylor and others have shown that there are three main ways in which people see themselves in a more positive light than is warranted by the facts of the situation, or other peoples' views of the situation. First, they see their past behavior, personal attributes and self as a person in an enhanced light. That is, they experience the illusion of self-enhancement. Second, they have an unrealistic sense of personal control and an exaggerated and unfounded belief that they can make things turn out better rather than worse; but are never responsible for bad things that happen to them. Third, they have an unfounded sense of optimism that the future will be rosier than the facts suggest it wsill. That is, they believe that it will hold more opportunities for good things to happen rather than adversity, stress and chaos. Most people are not aware of these positive illusions, mainly because the illusions work so well that we do not become aware of their positive nature. People avoid engaging in positive illusions that can be easily disconfirmed.

Self-deception

To maintain a positive view of the self and the world, we use a variety of defences and self-deceptive strategies to manage negative information (Taylor, 1989; Taylor and Brown, 1988, 1994). This negative information which is contrary to a positive world view includes the facts that our talents and attributes are broadly speaking normal, not exceptional; we have limited control over an unpredictable and chaotic world and over our own impulses, emotions, thoughts and actions; and our future is bleak. Our future is bleak insofar as it entails many losses including: the loss of youth and vitality; loss of health; loss of intellectual abilities and talents; loss of valued friendships; loss of work role; and inevitably our future entails our own deaths and the deaths of everyone we hold dear. The self-deceptive strategies we use to manage this awful information, which is contrary to an optimistic world view, includes defence mechanisms and positive illusions.

Denial and repression

Denial and repression are two widely used defence mechanisms which help us to maintain a positive or optimistic world view. Denial involves not acknowledging the existence or meaning of threatening or stressful events in the external world. Repression involves not acknowledging unacceptable aggressive or sexual impulses in a person's inner world. To be accepted into society only a limited range of impulses are permitted expression. Repression is one way of keeping unacceptable impulses that society demands we should not feel out of consciousness. Shelly Taylor (1989) argues that defences like denial and repression are maladaptive because they distort reality. One part of the brain becomes dissociated from another part that 'knows' the denied or distorted facts. Self-deceptive positive illusions, in contrast, allow people to know negative information about the self and manage this in a way that preserves a positive view of the self. Illusions are adaptive because they permit people to interpret reality in the best light possible. Extensive research has shown that positive illusions involve the cognitive processes of selective attention, benign forgetting, maintaining pockets of incompetence and maintaining negative self-schemas (Taylor and Brown, 1988, 1994).

Selective attention and benign forgetting

Selective attention involves noticing positive things and screening out negative things about ourselves, that is, filtering information in a biased way so that only positive news is registered and encoded. Benign forgetting is a process where negative information about the self is not easily recalled. In contrast, positive information that supports a positive view of the self is recalled in considerable detail.

Pockets of incompetence

Negative information about the self can also be managed by having clearly defined pockets of incompetence and accepting that in these areas one has few skills, for example saying 'I'm not good with numbers' but be that one is of high intelligence. We then ring-fence these areas off as peripheral to the essential core of the self which is viewed as having predominantly positive attributes. By ring-fencing pockets of incompetence and not using information about our performance in these domains in evaluating our self-worth, self-esteem is preserved.

Negative self-schema

A further strategy for managing negative information about the self is to develop a negative self-schema (in addition to a positive self-schema). Self-schemas may be developed around characteristics like being shy or overweight. A negative self-schema is an organized set of beliefs that allows us to anticipate situations in which negative information is likely to be received about the self and then to develop strategies for dealing with these, for example announcing that we are shy and so do not talk much. A negative self-schema allows a person to put a boundary around a negative personal attribute, to anticipate situations that may be relevant to it or not and to plan for these. Negative self-schemas may also protect self-esteem by allowing a person to attribute any negative evaluation of the self to the negative characteristic at the core of the negative self-schema, e.g. 'I didn't do well in the exam because my shyness prevented me from asking questions in class, and only those who ask questions get good exam results.'

DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE ILLUSIONS

The development of positive illusions is fostered by a parenting style where children are given information by their parents and encouraged to make choices within the context of
a warm relationship, with clear behavioral limits. Permissive or authoritarian parenting or parenting that is very cold does not facilitate the development of positive illusions. Positive self perception begins early in life. Preschoolers see themselves as competent and popular and this tendency to have a positive view of the self continues throughout life, although its strength diminishes gradually. This view of the self as good is partially determined by the way memory works. Memory is egocentric. Most of us remember the past as a drama in which we were the protagonists or heroes. Furthermore the information to which we selectively

attend and remember is determined by our self-schemas, that is, beliefs about the type of people that we are and our unique attributes. Self-schemas determine which aspects of a situation we attended to, and then our impressions of the situation are reinforced by that very information. So the athletic, musical person remembers that he was athletic and musical in that situation. Or the kind intelligent person remembers that he was kind and intelligent.

Most people see themselves as responsible for good things such as passing an exam or helping someone and not responsible for bad things such as failure or hurting others, because good things like success and kindness are what we intend to do and bad things like failure and cruelty are rarely intended. People also exaggerate the degree to which they are responsible for good outcomes in joint ventures. They take more than their share of the credit.

People who evaluate themselves positively hold others in high esteem also and so are more popular with others. This is true across the lifecycle from pre-school to old age (Mruk, 1999). People who view themselves as having positive attributes, who are optimistic about their future and who believe they can control important events in their lives work longer and harder because they expect a positive outcome from their work. When they confront an obstacle they keep trying various different solutions until they succeed, because they believe eventually they will. Thus their work style is characterized by strong motivation to succeed, a high level of persistence at challenging tasks, more effective performance and greater overall success.

The need for control and the perception of the self as capable of controlling the environment is present from birth. From their earliest months of life children show a need to control and master the environment. As they master one aspect they become bored and move on to the next. For children moderately novel situations are more stimulating and interesting than very familiar ones or situations that are completely unfamiliar. Thus children like environments that contain new challenges that are just beyond the limits of their competence, not one that contains very easy or very hard tasks and challenges.

Most adults believe that the world is controllable. We believe that with hard work, careful planning, and the right tools, technology and science, there is little that cannot be accomplished. We believe that natural disasters, diseases, social and economic problems, and war are all solvable problems. We believe that we succeed through effort and fail through laziness; so success is a sign of effort and failure is a sign of laziness. Most people do not believe that chaos or the unexpected play a major role in determining the course of their lives. In his book *Denial of Death,* Ernest Becker (1973) argues that our belief in the controllability and orderliness of the world protects us from constantly having to face the reality of our mortality, that we all live one step away from death.

We maintain a belief in personal control for a variety of reasons. We mistakenly categorize many events that have a desired outcome as being due to our actions. We misclassify events as controllable, because sometimes they co-occur. People have the tendency not to seek out negative instances. The belief in control reduces stress responses. In laboratory experiments where two groups of people are exposed to the same number of electric shocks or bursts of loud noise, but one group has a panic button (which they do not use), the group that perceives they have control shows less stress on physiological measures of heart rate and skin conductance (Carr and Wilde 1988).

POSITIVE ILLUSIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Positive illusions apply not only to the self but also to significant relationships. In a wide-ranging review of studies of intimate relationships and positive illusions, Marshall and Brown (2008) concluded that most people think that their partners are better than other people, their love is stronger than other people's love, that relationship problems such as poor communication or incompatible interests pose less of a threat to their relationship, and that they have more control over the outcome of their relationships than others and so are less likely to separate. People who idealize their partners and relationships report

greater relationship commitment and satisfaction and show greater relationship stability. Where two partners take this positive view of their relationship they are said to show *illusion collusion*, and this is associated with very strong relationship satisfaction and commitment. Positive illusions have also been found to apply to relationships with children. For example, Wenger and Fowers (2008) found that parents rated their own children as possessing more positive and fewer negative attributes than the average child. The more positively parents rated themselves, the more positively they rated their children.

MODIFYING POSITIVE ILLUSIONS

Positive illusions are stronger in children than in adults. They are probably hard-wired into our nervous systems because they are so adaptive from an evolutionary perspective. Illusions are best modified if they are maladaptive. Modifying positive illusions involves giving negative information in a way that is corrective but not devastating. Trauma, victimization and loss can shatter positive illusions and prevent people from seeing the self as good, the self as in control, and the future as rosy and safe. People who have been traumatized by catastrophic events, victimized and abused by others, or who become suddenly seriously ill, or suddenly bereaved all question their own worth, power to control things and the safety of the future world. Where these events happen early in life people are vulnerable to depression and illness in later life.