



The Positive Press

Newsletter No.10, December 2010

• Greetings

- It has been a good year of continued growth in the field of Positive Psychology. We have some new and exciting developments in New Zealand planned for 2011, and details are included in this 10th newsletter of the *Positive Press* as part of our ongoing mission to keep members informed.

• Association News

- **Membership Survey.** Thank you to all the members that replied to the survey advertised in the last newsletter. In general members commented that:
 - They learnt about the NZAPP online, or through and email from a friend.
 - Joined to learn more about positive psychology and meet like minded people.
 - They found the newsletters most valuable, closely followed by website content.
 - They would like the opportunity to attend workshops and a conference for networking opportunities, and for more publicity and a better media profile for the NZAPP.
 - They were satisfied or very satisfied with their membership.

• Topic: Mindfulness (by Reuben Rusk)

Mindfulness is “receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience” (Brown & Ryan, *J Pers Soc Psychol* 84-4: 822–848, 2003). Bishop et al. describe it as the combination of two elements: self-regulation of attention on present experience, and an attitude of curiosity and openness to the reality of that experience (*Clin Psychol Sci Prac* 11: 230–241, 2004). When we are mindful, we are aware of thoughts, feelings and sensations as they arise without judging them or becoming entangled in them. According to Ellen Langer, mindfulness helps us take in and process new information, adopt multiple perspectives, and pay better attention to what we say and do. It also allows us to shift our attention so that we can notice and appreciate the positives of life and feel less overwhelmed by the negatives.

Cultivating mindfulness can help us to rewire the neural circuitry of our brains. Experiments have shown that cultivating mindfulness changes the left-right ratio of activity in the pre-frontal cortex, which is correlated with positive emotions. Many studies have linked greater mindfulness with a host of physiological benefits (for example, improved immune system function and physical health, reduced pain, increased fertility in women, improved physical healing and better sleep). Increased mindfulness has been shown to bring many mental benefits such as reduced depression, anxiety and stress; improved perception, attention and memory; and greater pleasure, creativity and productivity. Mindfulness also benefits interpersonal relationships, and has been associated with greater marital happiness.

How is mindfulness cultivated? Practice. Many practise mindfulness meditation, and even a few minutes a day can have a significant effect. However, we can practice mindfulness doing many things, from walking to washing the dishes. For an excellent up-to-date introduction to Mindfulness, see the recently published book by Susan L. Smalley & Diana Winston, *Fully Present: The Science, Art, and Practice of Mindfulness* (Da Capo Press, 2010).

- **Review: Practicing Positive Psychology Coaching: Assessment, Diagnosis, and Intervention (Biswas-Diener, R., 2010 reprint ed., Wiley)**

- Reviewed by Alison Ogier-Price, Psychology Department, University of Canterbury

Robert Biswas-Diener provides a very readable book that focuses on practical interventions and tools for use in various forms of coaching and therapy practices, supported by relevant examples and case studies. The author is clearly a person with extensive knowledge based on both academic research and personal experience and has a particularly engaging writing style. The book is well-organised and can serve as a useful reference.

Biswas-Diener presents his model for using a “positive diagnosis” to assess a person’s capabilities through quite an extensive set of measures including for values, situational benefactors, self-esteem, motivation, optimism, personal strengths and meaning in life. He provides an interesting insight into how strengths and weaknesses interact. The thread of research findings continues throughout the book, with a substantial part following Snyder’s Hope Theory framework.

This is likely to be a very useful book for anyone looking to develop the use of positive psychology within a coaching framework.

- **Stay Informed**

- **Journals:**

- [The Journal of Positive Psychology](#)

(The website states): “The Journal brings together leading work in positive psychology undertaken by researchers across different subdisciplines within psychology (e.g., social, personality, clinical, developmental, health, organizational), as well as across other social and behavioral disciplines (e.g., sociology, family studies, anthropology, neuroscience, philosophy, economics, medicine, organizational sciences).

Topics appropriate for the Journal include original research on human strengths and virtues, personal and social well-being, as well as applications to psychotherapy and counseling. Articles that evaluate the teaching and coaching of positive psychology are also invited. Special emphasis is placed on new theoretical and methodological approaches that advance both the science and practice of positive psychology. The Journal publishes peer-reviewed original research reports, theoretical and review articles, and book reviews”.

- [Journal of Happiness Studies](#)

(The website states): The Journal of Happiness Studies is a peer reviewed scientific journal devoted to subjective well-being. It covers both cognitive evaluations of life (like life-satisfaction), and affective enjoyment of life (such as mood level). Next to contributions on appraisal of life-as-a-whole, the journal accepts contributions on life domains (such as job-satisfaction) and life-aspects (such as perceived meaning of life).

The Journal of Happiness Studies provides a forum for two main traditions in happiness research: 1) speculative reflection on the good life, and 2) empirical investigation of subjective well-being. Contributions from all sciences are welcomed: alpha-sciences (in particular philosophy), beta-sciences (especially health related quality-of-life research) and gamma-sciences (not only psychology and sociology, but also economy).

Leading questions concern the conceptualization, measurement, prevalence, explanation, evaluation, imagination and study of happiness.

- [Journal of Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being](#)

(The website states): Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being is one of the two official journals of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), the oldest worldwide association of scholars and practitioners of the discipline of psychology (founded in 1920).

Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being is a peer-reviewed outlet for the scholarly dissemination of scientific findings and practical applications in the domains of health and well-being. Articles are encouraged from all areas of applied psychology including clinical, health, counseling educational, sport, cross-cultural and environmental psychology. The mission of the journal is to provide readers with outstanding articles that present the latest data and best practices in the application of psychology to the promotion of well-being and optimal functioning.

Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being will publish empirical work, theoretical papers, model intervention programs, case studies, debates, and reviews. Of particular interest are intervention studies (e.g., randomized controlled trials) and meta-analytic reviews.

- [International Journal of Wellbeing](#)

(The website states): The International Journal of Wellbeing was established in 2010. The main aim of this journal is to promote interdisciplinary research on wellbeing. As such, the editorial team are dedicated to open access academic research, and to making the journal's content permanently free for all readers and authors. The first issue will be available on the 31st

January 2011, and features articles from the leaders in the field. You can navigate to this journal's website and sign up for free. More information about this journal will be available in the next newsletter.

- **New Affiliates:** Global Chinese Positive Psychology Association <http://globalcppa.org/>
- **Courses:** A list of Positive Psychology courses around the world, including Australia, USA, Mexico, UK and South Africa. <http://adjix.com/6sim>.

• Events

- 2010 Dec 14-15 [1st International Congress of Coaching Psychology, London, U.K](#)
 - The first in a series of events which form part of an international congress held around the world to bring together the global coaching psychology community. Through debate and discussion together we can explore the contribution that coaching psychology makes for individuals, groups, organisations, and society. One of the keynote speakers includes Alex Linley.
- 2011 June 16-17 [6th Annual Happiness & Its Causes Conference, Brisbane](#)
 - NZAPP is an Endorsing Body for the 6th Annual Happiness & Its Causes Conference in 2011. Speakers for the conference include: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the eminent psychologist Dr Paul Ekman and renowned Buddhist monk and meditator, Matthieu Ricard. Others include Robert Biswas-Diener (his latest book reviewed above), Michael J Gelb, Jane Goodall, Russ Harris, Anthony Grant, amongst so many.
- 18-21 July 2011 [36th Annual National Wellness Conference, University of Wisconsin, USA](#)
 - (*Website states*): The theme, "Growing Wellness," enthuses all individuals in wellness and health promotion to cultivate healthy change and nurture well living not only in individual clients and employees, but also in the communities (families, neighborhoods, cultural groups, and beyond) to which they belong. Committed to the well person, home, workplace, and community -- and valuing that wellness is for everyone -- we employ innovative practices to grow wellness and enrich lives.
 - The conference features leading positive psychologists Barbara Fredrickson and David Myers at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, The theme is "Pathways to Optimal Well-being: Exercising Strengths/Increasing Real Happiness.
- 2011 July 23-26 [2nd World Congress on Positive Psychology \(IPPA\). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.](#)
 - (*Website states*): This unparalleled international conference - bringing together academics and practitioners - will gather the world's most renowned experts in positive psychology to present their latest findings and best practices. It is a great opportunity for anyone interested in learning how the "science of thriving" is changing the lives of individuals, communities, and institutions around the globe. Lectures, workshops, symposia and poster sessions will feature leading-edge research, as well as applications of positive psychology in a variety of fields - from business to education to medicine.

• NZAPP Membership News

- **Membership Total:** 561 (up from 480 in September).
- **Book Prize to a Lucky Member:** *100 Ways to Happiness: A Guide for Busy People*, by Dr. Timothy Sharp. Dr. Sharp founded and runs the very popular and successful *Happiness Institute* in Australia, and their website has some fantastic free resources (<http://www.thehappinessinstitute.com/>).
 - *The randomly-drawn member who wins this newsletter's book prize is: Beverley Ander.*
- A Certificate of Membership to the New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology, is available on request, by emailing [info @ nzapp.co.nz](mailto:info@nzapp.co.nz).

• Support

- Suggestions as to what you would like included in the newsletter are welcomed.
- Please consider providing a book or article review for the next newsletter.
- Other contributions may include information of interest, thoughts on an area of positive psychology, general comments or questions, and progress on current research.
- You can further support your association by informing your networks, friends, and colleagues about the NZAPP.

"Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won't)." – James Baraz