



## The Positive Press

Newsletter No.8, June 2010

### • Greetings

- Here we are almost half way through 2010, and with our eighth issue of *The Positive Press*! Our ongoing mission is to keep members informed about new developments in positive psychology in New Zealand and around the world.
- If you are interested in being more directly involved in the future development of the NZAPP, and standing for a position on the committee in the forthcoming online AGM (details coming soon), please register your interest by email to: [info@nzapp.co.nz](mailto:info@nzapp.co.nz) (Deadline: 30<sup>th</sup> June).

### • Topic of Interest

- **Authentic Happiness Revised - Denise Quinlan's point-of-view**

Martin Seligman has revised his Authentic Happiness theory from the version described in his 2002 book, *Authentic Happiness*. This theory is now an *a priori* theory of general well-being and details of it will be released in 2011 in a book called 'The Search for Well-being' (FreePress).

What's changed? 'Happiness' is no longer the super-ordinate construct. Instead, 'Well-being' is the 'roof' of this new theoretical approach, which is held up by four pillars rather than the previous three (which were pleasure, engagement, and meaning). The four pillars are: *positive emotion or experience*, including engagement and 'happiness', where that is defined as positive affect; *positive meaning*, *positive relationships*, and *positive accomplishment*. Seligman believes that each of these pillars represents a pathway which people pursue for its own sake, and which can contribute to well-being.

Of particular interest is the fact that Seligman now describes a new 'floor' for this theory, that of *character strengths*, or positive traits/characteristics, which are said to underpin and contribute to all four pillars. Previously, strengths have been hypothesised to contribute to engagement and fulfilment but their impact on relationships has not been explicitly studied. Most strengths research has focused on people as individual units, identifying and developing their strengths to improve engagement and fulfilment, and so to experience greater happiness or well-being. Acknowledging the importance of strengths to relationships may mean that we can begin to examine the effect of strengths on groups of people. It may be that the biggest well-being effect of strengths is not through individually working on our strengths, but through having those around us recognise and acknowledge our strengths and support us in our strengths' development. This approach may result in significant well-being gains through enhanced relationships.

### • Review: Conference

- **Happiness and it's Causes (Sydney, 2010 May 5-6) – reviewed by Aaron Jarden**

The 2010 Happiness and it's Causes conference (<http://www.happinessanditscauses.com.au/>), of the Vajarayana Institute (<http://www.vajrayana.com.au/>) was recently held at the spectacular Sydney Events Centre in Darling Harbour. This conference stood out for its high quality of organisation and diverse offerings. Unlike traditional academic conferences to which I am accustomed, this conference encompassed an eclectic balance of scientific, religious, personal, and commercial interests. The conference was well attended with thousands of participants.

Highlights included the two talks by Barry Schwartz (both of which can be found on <http://www.Ted.com>) – one on how choice impacts happiness, and the other on how rules and incentives limit thinking, and the talk by James Fowler on how happiness spreads through social networks. This latter talk was novel and cutting edge, with his book "*Connected: The amazing power of social networks and how they shape our lives*" having only just been released. Other

highlights included Naomi Wolf (author of the well known *Beauty Myth*) talking about how outside influences, such as the media's portrayal of body image, affects happiness. Many conference attendees I spoke to particularly enjoyed Barbara Frederickson's talk on positive emotions or Edward De Bono's talk on creative thinking. Interspersed amongst these intellectual heavyweights were many personal stories of resilience, forgiveness, and inspiration.

## • NZ Research

### ○ Researcher Profile

An NZAPP member and coach in Napier, Jo Willis ([jo.u-design@clear.net.nz](mailto:jo.u-design@clear.net.nz)), is completing an MA in Coaching and Mentoring Practice through Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, UK, and is enrolled in the Penn Introduction to Positive Psychology on-line course. Her dissertation is entitled "How to operationalize Positive Psychology's 'Broaden and Build' Theory in Person-centered Coaching."

- *We would like to know (and inform the membership) of current Positive Psychology researchers and projects in NZ. Please send a brief description of any project you are involved in, with project contact details and location, to [editor@positivepsychology.org.nz](mailto:editor@positivepsychology.org.nz)*
- The International Wellbeing Study (<http://www.wellbeingstudy.com/>), in which many NZAPP members are participating and/or collaborating with, is now available in 15 different languages.

## • Stay Informed

- **Courses:** A list of Positive Psychology courses that can be found around the world, including Australia, USA, Mexico, UK and South Africa: <http://adjix.com/6sim>.
- **Journals:**
  - [The Journal of Positive Psychology](#)
  - [Journal of Happiness Studies](#)
  - [Journal of Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being](#)

## • Events

- 2010 June 11-12 [4<sup>th</sup> Australian Conference on Evidence-based Coaching, Sydney, Australia](#)
- 2010 June [Positive psychology workshops Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Brisbane](#)
- 2010 June 23-26 [5<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology, Copenhagen, Denmark](#)
- 2010 July 28-31 [10<sup>th</sup> ISQOLS \(Int.Soc. for Qual.-of-Life Studies\) Conference, Bangkok, Thailand](#)
- 2010 Dec 14-15 [1<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Coaching Psychology, London, UK](#)
- 2010 Aug 5-8 [6<sup>th</sup> Biennial International Meaning Conference, Vancouver, Canada](#)
- 2011 July 23-26 [2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress on Positive Psychology \(IPPA\). Philadelphia, USA](#)

## • NZAPP Membership News

- **Membership Total:** 434 (up from 375 in March).

- **Book Prize to a Lucky Member:** *Happiness, Healing, Enhancement: Your Casebook Collection For Applying Positive Psychology in Therapy*. Edited by George W. Burns. The randomly-drawn member who wins this newsletter's book prize is member 138: Sarah Anticich of Christchurch. Congratulations!

Chris Peterson describes this book as "Filled with good strategies based in research, compelling case material, and most importantly, practical advice, this book belongs in the library of everyone interested in what it means to live well. It provides not only ample food for thought, but for action." This is a practical guide to applying the principles of positive psychology to good mental health, and includes contributions from some of the world's foremost positive psychology researchers and practitioners, including P. Alex Linley, Antonella Delle Fave, and Robert Biswas-Diener.

- A Certificate of Membership to the NZAPP is available on request, by emailing: [info@nzapp.co.nz](mailto:info@nzapp.co.nz)

- **Support**

- Contributions to these newsletters are welcomed, and as such, book or article reviews are invited. Suggestions as to what you would like included are also welcomed.
- You can further support your association by informing your networks, friends, and colleagues about the NZAPP.

- **Quote**

"Happiness depends, as nature shows, less on exterior things than most suppose." - William Cowper (1817)