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Invited Speakers Abstracts

SL: Opening Event: Special Lectures Liberty Ballroom

Positive Education

Martin Seligman, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Positive education is defined as education for both traditional skills and for happiness. The high prevalence of depression, the small rise in life satisfaction, and the synergy between learning and positive emotion all argue that the skills for happiness should be taught in school. There is substantial evidence from well controlled studies that skills that increase resilience, positive emotion, engagement, and meaning can be taught to schoolchildren. We present the story of teaching these skills to an entire school—Geelong Grammar School—in Australia, and we speculate that positive education will form the basis of a “new prosperity,” a politics that values both wealth and well being.

Psychology of Evil (The Lucifer Effect)

Philip Zimbardo, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, USA

Evil is the antithesis of all that positive psychology represents, yet it must still be acknowledged as the dark side of human nature. Evil and Heroism are the Yin and Yang of the Human Condition. If Evil is the exercise of personal and/ or systemic power to intentionally harm, hurt or destroy others, then Heroism is the exercise of personal power to intentionally help and support others, or oppose injustice, with awareness of potential cost and no expectation of extrinsic reward. The first part of my presentation focuses on psychological research that has created evil-generating social contexts, which seduce most good people into evil actions. It is supplemented by an analysis of the evil created in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison by ordinary men and women playing the role of military police. Then we flip the coin to reveal ordinary people whose "heroic imagination" challenges the "hostile imagination" of the perpetrators of evil. Exemplars from around the world are presented each performing different kinds of heroic deeds. I end with a call for new research on heroic decision making, as well as new educational curricula to encourage youth to join forces in my new "Heroes-In-Waiting" program.

PL1 New Findings on Happiness

Ed Diener, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL, USA

The field of subjective well-being is changing rapidly, and so many scientists and practitioners have not been able to keep up with very recent advances in the field, many of which have occurred in the past decade. Thus, some previous findings are over-used and misinterpreted in light of current findings. Because many of the older findings provided core beliefs in the field, it is important that participants be apprised of the latest findings, so that they have a more sophisticated and accurate view of the field. This view requires: 1) Acknowledging that past emphasis on causes of well-being is now complemented by analysis of outcomes of well-being; 2) Maintaining a more balanced view of the importance of life circumstances compared to personality, which emphasizes that organizations and societies are also important to well-being, not simply the top-down emphasis of factors within the person; 3) Maintaining a more balanced view of adaptation to circumstances, which shows that people do adapt to some degree to many life circumstances, but often not completely so; 4) Acknowledging that although we have long

understood there are different components of subjective well-being, there was little understanding of the causes or outcomes of them. Therefore, subjective well-being or “happiness” was often in fact discussed as a single thing. In this talk, evidence will show that the causes of life satisfaction and positive affect are quite distinct, and the implications of this for practice and policy are described.

PL2 Happiness and Public Policy

Richard Layard, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom

This session will explore the case of basing public policy on the maximisation of happiness and discuss what would be done differently in that case. The recent impact of happiness thinking on public policy in Britain is discussed.

IN1 Well-Being Therapy

Giovanni Fava, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy

A specific psychotherapeutic strategy for increasing psychological well-being and resilience, well-being therapy, has been developed and validated in a number of randomized controlled trials. The findings indicate that flourishing and resilience can be promoted by specific interventions leading to a positive evaluation of one's self, a sense of continued growth and development, the belief that life is purposeful and meaningful, the possession of quality relations with others, the capacity to manage affectively one's life, and a sense of self-determination. A decreased vulnerability to depression and anxiety has been demonstrated after well-being therapy in high-risk populations. There are important implications for the state/trait dichotomy in psychological well-being and for the concept of recovery in mood and anxiety disorders.

IN2 The Positive Side of Trauma

Carmelo Vázquez, Complutense University at Madrid, Madrid, Spain

Is there a positive side to trauma? Most of the research on the psychological consequences of trauma has been traditionally dominated by a clinical view that has underlain the negative effects (i.e., symptoms and problems in functioning) of facing adversity. Yet, in the last decade, a new batch of research has complemented this view and has provided us with new perspectives from which to analyze the effects of trauma from a more comprehensive position. Derived from this new research, there is no longer any doubt that traumatic events do not necessarily have negative or devastating psychological consequences. The evidence for this conclusion comes from at least three different sources.

First, recent epidemiological evidence is showing that resilience is perhaps the most common outcome when normal people encounter serious threats in their lives. Second, clinical and field studies are also showing that positive emotions, cognitions, and behaviors are found more often than previously thought in people facing adverse events. These unexpected findings were made possible when the appropriate methodologies and instruments have begun to be used to assess the complex array of reactions that human beings may experience in difficult situations. Furthermore, this new research is also inspired by theoretical models of emotion that suggest that positive emotions are relatively independent of negative emotions (i.e., to some extent, positive emotions can coexist with negative ones in a given timeframe). A third source of evidence is related to research that has focused on the consequences of trauma. Although it undeniable that traumatic events may have a deleterious impact on some people, there is increasing evidence showing that most people are not only resilient but are also able to find some kind of personal or even societal benefits after having faced such events (e.g., medical illnesses, natural disasters, or political violence). For instance, there are consistent findings showing that, after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, in the USA and of March 11th, 2004, in Spain, most of the general population was

resilient and even showed significant positive reactions as a consequence of the attacks (e.g., increased sense of community cohesion, philanthropic behaviors, etc.).

In this lecture, we will review some of the most relevant evidence converging from different types of research and will also show the models that may help us to explain the role of these positive reactions in the process of adaptation to adversity. Yet, although we know much more about the positive sides of trauma than some years ago, we still need further research to advance our knowledge of the psychological, environmental, and sociocultural factors that promote either resilience or vulnerability, and also of the ultimate adaptive role of this array of positive reactions.

In conclusion, this new view of trauma is a paradigmatic example of how a positive view can complement and expand our understanding of human behavior even under extremely difficult circumstances. The analysis of human suffering is not something beyond the scope of Positive Psychology. In fact, this positive approach can ultimately provide us with better models to understand human nature.

IN3 Proactive Behavior at Work—A Topic of Positive Work and Organizational Psychology

Michael Frese, University of Giessen, Giessen, Germany

I shall summarize research that my colleagues and I have conducted over the past 20 years regarding entrepreneurship and personal initiative. The general point is that the common denominator of important influence at work is proactive behavior and this also happens to be the common denominator of success by entrepreneurs. Proactive behavior consists of self-starting and proactive behaviors that overcome barriers on the way toward goals. Proactive behavior is behavior – this has consequences that are overwhelmingly positive for the person him or herself and for the organization. Small business owners' personal initiative is related to the performance of their firms. Further, climate for personal initiative predicts the profitability of medium sized businesses. In another set of studies, we examine how employees' self-starting, proactive behaviors change the conditions under which they work. By exercising personal initiative, people change their workplaces and, therefore, their organization to some extent. It is possible to change proactive behavior. A three day training applied to teach Ugandan small business owners a higher degree of personal initiative leads to a significant effect on.

IN4 Successful Aging

Alexandra Freund, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

In this talk, I will present a theoretical framework of successful aging that entails the interplay of three processes, namely selection, optimization, and compensation. I will present empirical studies in support of this theory using a multi-methodological approach drawing on self-report, diary studies, and behavior. Particular attention will be given to motivational aspects contributing to successful aging. I will highlight three aspects of how motivational development in adulthood contributes to successful aging: (1) goal conflict and goal facilitation, (2) a shift from a predominant gain orientation in young adulthood to an orientation towards maintenance and the prevention of losses in old age, and (3) the role of focusing on the outcomes versus the process of goal-pursuit. Taken together, these aspects of motivational development suggest a positive trajectory into successful aging.

IN5 Positive Health: How to Die Young as Late as Possible

Raymond Fowler, La Jolla, CA, USA

Health is more than the absence of illness. Research in Positive Psychology and Positive Health has identified factors, especially physical activity, that can help people live longer, healthier and happier lives.

Lifestyle changes that facilitate health throughout the lifespan will be presented, along with ways to build those changes into everyday life.

IN6 Positivity: The Path to Flourishing

Barbara Fredrickson, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

Barbara Fredrickson's research focuses on the value of positivity. Her broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions holds that, unlike negative emotions, which narrow people's behavioral urges toward specific action tendencies that were life preserving for our ancestors (e.g., fight, flight), positive emotions broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires (e.g., play, explore) in ways that, over time, build consequential personal resources that also aided our ancestor's survival. In this presentation, Fredrickson presents the most recent evidence for this theory.

IN7 World Database of Happiness: How to Keep You in the Growing Stream of Research Findings

Ruut Veenhoven, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Research in positive psychology is soaring and so is research on happiness. Yet more research does not always give rise to better understanding, since it is difficult to get an overview of the findings. Accumulation of knowledge is hindered by many things, such as differences in terminology, measurement and analysis. Periodical review studies are required to keep track of the progress, yet review studies become more difficult as the pile of findings is getting bigger and its growth faster. Currently the research data on happiness have become so rich that a single person cannot oversee them all anymore. The World Database of Happiness is devised to deal with that problem. The database stores *research findings* and presents these in standardized abstracts. This system differs from bibliographies that store 'publications' and data-archives that store 'investigations'. The system prepares for synthetic analysis by capitalizing on conceptual selectiveness, comparability and completeness. The database is freely available on the Web. The Internet address is: <http://worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl>

The technique of this database is explained and applications are demonstrated. Possibilities for cooperation in this project are offered.

IN8 On the Psychology of Passion: Contributions to Positive Psychology

Robert Vallerand, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada

Positive psychology seeks to uncover some of the strengths that help people thrive. It is proposed that one such variable is passion. Recently, Vallerand and his colleagues (2003) have proposed a new conceptualization of passion. Passion is defined as a strong inclination or desire for a self-defining activity that we love, value, and spend a considerable amount of time on. Two types of passion are proposed: a harmonious and an obsessive passion. Obsessive passion is involved when people feel that they can't help themselves and have to surrender to their desire to engage in the passionate activity. It is as if the activity controlled the person. Obsessive passion results from a controlled internalization (Deci & Ryan, 2000) of the activity in the person's identity. On the other hand, harmonious passion refers to a strong inclination for the activity that nevertheless remains under the person's control. The person can choose when to and when not to engage in the activity, thus preventing conflict from arising between activity engagement in the passionate activity and other life activities. Harmonious passion results from an autonomous internalization of the activity in identity. In this address, I review research that reveals that harmonious passion is typically associated with adaptive outcomes while obsessive passion is related to less adaptive and at times maladaptive outcomes. These findings have been obtained with respect to a number of affective, cognitive, mental and physical health, relationships, and performance

variables with diverse populations. I also address the role of personality and social variables in the development of passion. Finally, some directions for future research are proposed.

IN9 The State of Play in Coaching Today: Coaching as an Evidence-Based Applied Positive Psychology

Anthony Grant, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Coaching and Positive Psychology share many common aims, particularly in relation to the enhancement of goal attainment and the improvement of well-being. Positive Psychology has now developed considerable currency in both the applied and academic spheres. In contrast, although “coaching” has significant currency in applied settings, within academia it is still sometimes perceived of as hyperbolic, pseudoscientific, faddish and more of a commercial marketing opportunity than a rigorous change methodology. However, an evidence-based approach to coaching, one which explicitly draws on and extends existing psychological frameworks as a foundation for coaching research and practice, has the very real potential to make significant contributions to the broader humanistic and psychological enterprise. Indeed, coaching is central to the research and practice of applied positive psychology, and the research basis for coaching has significantly grown over the past five years. This session gives an overview of the current state of play in evidence-based coaching and asks can coaching help positive psychology to flourish? Is it developing a solid knowledge base, or is it simply regurgitating past ideas and practices? In addressing these issues I present a languishing/flourishing model of well-being and goal attainment for use in coaching research and practice, and discuss key research from the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney.

IN10 Do We Really Pursue Happiness?

Antonella Delle Fave, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy

One of the basic difficulties for researchers in positive psychology is to find a general agreement on concepts and constructs related to happiness and well-being. These two terms are affected by both cultural and psychological variations. Different individuals and communities may develop different conceptions of what is good and desirable, according to their specific features. Moreover, good is not necessarily synonymous with desirable, from both the individual and social perspectives. Personal and collective outlooks, values, meanings, and priorities of needs come into play in this evaluation. In particular, scholars from various cultures and traditions have argued that happiness cannot be directly achieved; rather it arises as a by-product of pursuing goals and cultivating activities that people consider as important and meaningful.

The elusiveness of well-being related terms requires an integrated approach joining quantitative analyses with qualitative explorations, in order to shed light on commonalities and differences among these terms. It also requires cross-cultural investigations taking into account linguistic and semantic variations in the use of these terms. In particular, only few studies have dealt so far with the crucial issue of the definition of happiness.

Cross-cultural findings from two research approaches addressing these topics will be briefly illustrated, specifically focusing on the concept of happiness and on eudaimonic dimensions such as optimal experience, goals and meanings. Suggestions will be drawn with the aim of promoting advancements in conceptualization and operationalization of well-being, happiness and related terms.

IN11 Positive Psychology and the Self-Image of What It Is to Be Human

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA, USA

One of the main promises of positive psychology, and of positive social science in general, is to help restore the self-concept that humanity has of itself. Professor C's talk will provide a brief survey of how thinkers in historical times have thought about human nature, the decline in optimism about humanity in the last century, and the hopes that positive psychology, drawing on the best of the past and building knowledge for the future, can redress some of the unwarranted pessimism that the social sciences, and psychology in particular, have succumbed to. While not as concrete a contribution as some others that positive psychology can make, this one is likely to be among the most important ones.

IN12 The Role and Contribution of Positive Psychology to Korean Context

Yong-Lin Moon, College of Education, Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea

Positive Psychology has focused attention on the positive rather than the pathological side of human psychology. Its research area generally comprises three parts: positive emotion, positive traits and positive institutions. These are mutually supporting: positive institutions support positive traits, which in turn support positive emotions.

The theme of this lecture is concerned with the third part, that is, positive institutions. In explaining an individual's happiness, positive institutions have a significant influence in terms of role expectation, ideology, habits, stereotypes, customs, system, etc. Through such various forms, institutions give uniformity or similarity among people, in their sense of happiness or well-being. The lecture will focus on the process; how the forms of institutions make a difference in personal feelings of happiness. The process will be explained using the concept of "Frames of Meaning for Living" (FML).

In spite of two persons having similar positive emotions and traits at a given point in time, their level of perceived happiness may differ according to the forms or contents of the positive institutions in which they live. This can be because they have different "frames of meaning for living"; that is a different FML. Moreover, though differences of perceived happiness between men and women may be due partly to their positive emotions and traits, it may be also be partly due to their FML, having developed their own FML (mentally and neurobiologically) through their own idiosyncratic life event and trajectories. A husband and his wife may both be happy, but their FML could be constituted by quite a different tone and color.

The concept of FML will be applied in explaining the sense of happiness in the Korean context. The dominant FML for Koreans is Confucian; as such that FML will strongly influence Korean's happiness, giving it distinctive features and colors.

IN13 The Discovery and Design of Positive Institutions: How Appreciative Inquiry is Revolutionizing the Field of Organizational Change

David Cooperrider, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

One of the most exciting developments in positive psychology—what some have called the 3rd pillar focusing on "positive institutions"—is the methodology and philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry or "AI". In the years since the original theory for Appreciative Inquiry into Organizational Life was articulated at Case Western Reserve University there have been thousands of scholars, leaders, colleagues, and students involved in co-creating new concepts and practices for understanding Appreciative Inquiry, and for bringing its life-centric spirit of inquiry into organizations and institutions all over the world. As Bob Quinn wrote "appreciative inquiry is revolutionizing the field of organization development".

In this talk David Cooperrider, founder of AI and thought leader in the discovery and design of positive institutions, explores "the three circles of the strengths revolution" and defines positive institutions as—organizations that elevate, combine and magnify, and refract our highest human strengths into the world. It's through positive institutions, proposes Cooperrider, that we as human beings magnify and bring more

love, wisdom, humanity, and courage and other VIA strengths into the world. Through narratives and video clips from Cooperrider's most recent research into "business as an agent of world benefit" this session shares how AI is used in the discovery and design of positive institutions. It is a project, says Cooperrider, that shows the huge applied potential of positive psychology - with leading CEOs, the UN, and corporations such as Hewlett Packard, Fairmount Minerals, and Wal-Mart.

IN14 Positive Psychology is about Flourishing, but What Is Flourishing about? A Functional Approach to Human Growth and Well-Being

Joar Vittersø, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway

The idea of human flourishing is notoriously difficult to define. The current talk argues, however, that it is not the definition of flourishing that is at issue, but the concept. In biology, for example, Darwin's contribution was not to define evolution but to understand it. Focusing on conceptualization and the role of adaptation made relevant by the theory of evolution, the paper proposes a functional approach as the framework for analysis of human flourishing. A model is presented, positing that the adaptive role of hedonic feelings is to regulate stability and homeostasis in human systems, and that these feelings basically are created in states of equilibrium or assimilation. To regulate change and growth, a distinct set of feelings exists, which may be labeled eudaimonic feelings. Eudaimonic feelings are produced to motivate behavior in challenging environments, when engagement for difficult goals is required or when accommodation of cognitive structures is needed for a stimulus or event to be perceived as meaningful. It is the functional dynamics between hedonic and eudaimonic elements of well-being that constitutes human flourishing. A series of empirical observations are presented in support of the model. Implications are discussed, in particular the idea that happiness is set-point regulated in a cybernetic system. In the functional model of well-being, adaptation, and not happiness, is the system variable being regulated. Happiness and satisfaction are rather the correcting mechanisms enabling humans to successful adaptation to environments.

IN15 Let the Good Times Roll: Positive Interactions in Close Relationships

Shelly Gable, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA, USA

People share the ups and downs of everyday life with close others. Research has largely focused on how others respond to our misfortunes, known broadly as social support. However, our recent work examining support in the context of both positive and negative event discussions shows that responses of close others to *positive* event disclosures (i.e., capitalization) are strongly related to both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes; and often more strongly predictive of outcomes such as relationship dissolution than responses to negative event disclosures. During this talk I will review research on the implications of capitalizing on the good times for individuals and relationships. The focus will be on theoretical and empirical importance of understanding how positive interactions cultivate intimacy and positive emotions, and enhance social bonds.