

Positive Psychology: Seligman Protocol

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Objectives

- Describe the 6 modules of the Seligman Positive Psychology Intervention
- Present the 1st two modules today (or as far as we can get!)
- Module 1:
 - Reduce Determinism
 - Express Gratitude
 - Practice Forgiveness
- Module 2
 - Enhancing Pleasure
 - Enhancing Gratification



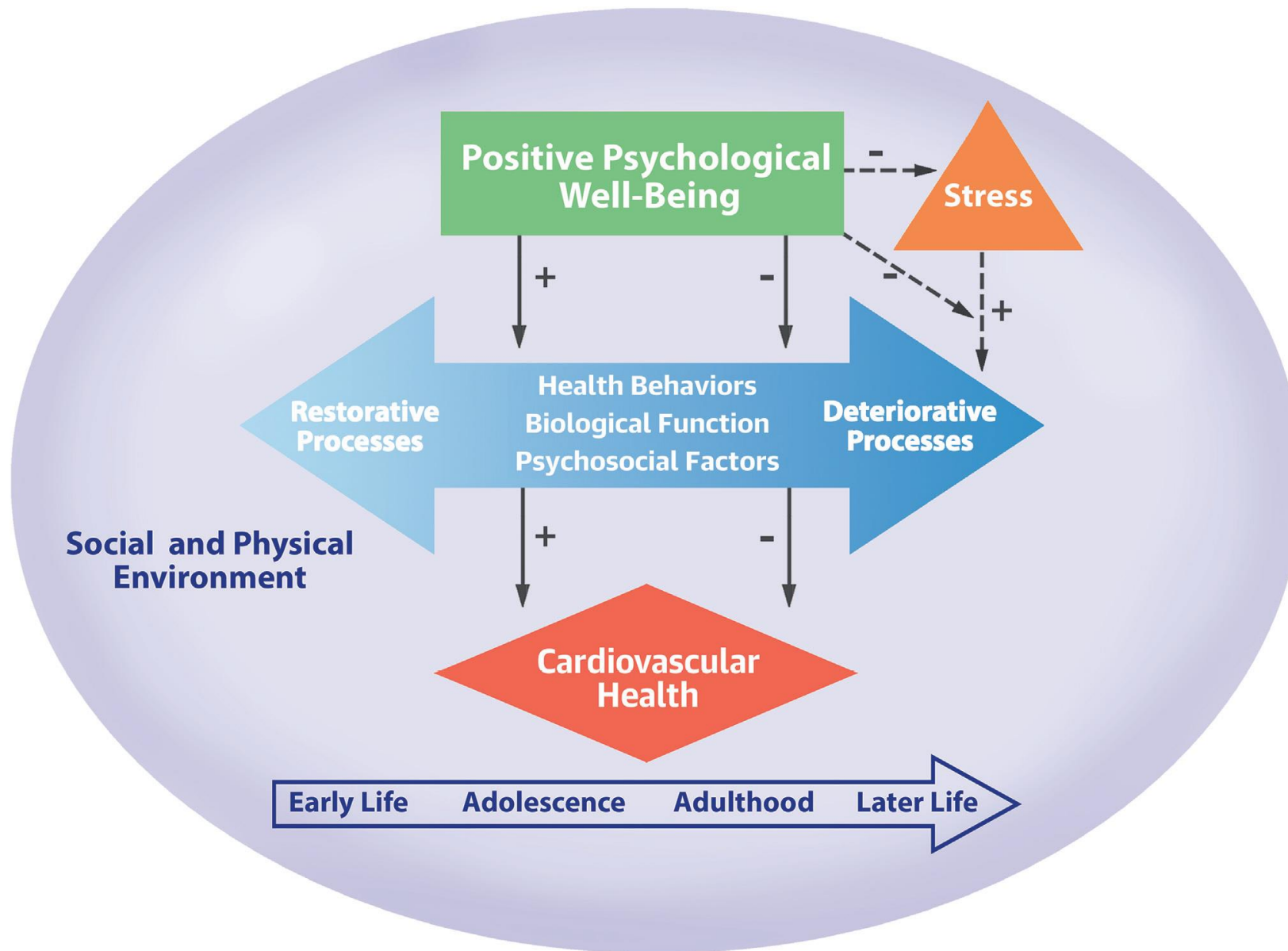
Goals

Increase

- **Positive Emotion** (happiness, joy, gratitude, love, hope, life satisfaction)
- **Engagement/ “Flow”**
- **Relationships** (Feeling supported, loved, and valued by others)
- **Meaning & Purpose**
- **Achievement** (intrinsic goals, sense of pride)

Decrease

- **Depression**
- **Anxiety and Worry**
- **Perceived Stress**



PPI Program Guidelines

- You are invited to **commit** to this program
- Complete the **surveys**
 - Baseline (before 1st class today), if you forgot or haven't yet, you can still do it after this class!
 - Complete same survey once every month
 - Evaluate me, the presenter/facilitator, right after every class
- Set **personalized goals** at the end of every class
- **Complete the “minimum dose”** for all positive psychology strategies between classes, when that is specified
- **Keep track** of what you do on a tracking sheet (self-monitoring form)

Seligman PPI

Module 1: Increase Satisfaction About the Past

Module 2: Enhance Happiness in the Present

Module 3: Optimism About the Future

Module 4: Renewing Strength and Virtue

Module 5: Valuing & Using Strengths & Virtues

Module 6: Enhancing Meaning in Life

Increase Satisfaction About the Past

Module 1

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Reduce Determinism

Strategy #1

Does Your Past Determine Your Future?

- Absolutely Yes!
 - **Charles Darwin**: we are the product of long history of evolution
 - **Sigmund Freud**: childhood experiences determine adult personality
- No (not totally, we have some control)
 - **Aaron T. Beck**: the way we make sense of, interpret, think about ourselves, the world, and the future, change help us change the way we feel emotionally and help us change our behavior



2 Prisons

- #1: “Many people are embittered about their past, and unduly passive about their future, because they believe that bad past events in their personal history have imprisoned them” (Seligman)
- #2: Psychodynamics: you must express your emotion, or else it will seep out in another way
 - e.g., if you don’t express your anger or rage, it will come out elsewhere

Hostility

- The true toxic element in the Type A behavior pattern (not time urgency, competitiveness, or suppression of anger)
- Dwelling on trespass and the expression of anger is associated with more anger, and more heart disease!
- In a study of 255 medical students, those with the most expressed anger were 5 times more likely to develop heart disease as the least angry
- In another study, men with highest risk of later heart attacks were the ones with more explosive voices, more irritable when forced to wait, and more outwardly directed anger

What drives dissatisfaction with the past?

Insufficient
appreciation and
savoring of good
events in our past

Overemphasis of
the bad ones

What increases satisfaction with the past?



Gratitude



Forgiveness



Express Gratitude

Strategy #2

Express Gratitude



Spend at least 5 minutes every day, preferably right before brushing your teeth before bed



Prepare a notepad with at least 14 pages



Think back on the past 24 hours, and write about up to 5 things in your life that you are grateful or thankful for



Practicing Forgiveness

Strategy #3



Practice Forgiveness


- **REACH:** 5-step process for facilitating forgiveness (Everett Worthington, PhD)
- **Recall the hurt**
 - In as objective a way as you can
 - Do not think of the other person as evil
 - Do not wallow in self-pity
 - Take deep, slow, calming breaths as you visualize the event

E =
Empathize

- Try to understand the perpetrator's point of view why this person hurt you
- Make a plausible story that the transgressor might tell if challenged to explain
- Remember:
 - When others feel their survival is threatened, they will hurt innocents
 - People who attack others are themselves usually in a state of fear, worry, or hurt
 - The situation a person finds themselves in, and not his underlying personality, can lead to hurting
 - People often don't think when they hurt others; they just lash out

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the white background. The text 'A = Altruistic Gift of Forgiveness' is written in white, sans-serif font inside this circle.

A = Altruistic Gift of Forgiveness


- First recall a time when you transgressed, felt guilty, and were forgiven
 - That was receiving the gift of forgiveness by another person because you needed it, and you were grateful
 - Don't forgive out of self-interest; we give it because it is for the trespasser's own good
 - Tell yourself you can rise above hurt and vengeance
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of four yellow, curved, dashed lines arranged in a curved path from the bottom right towards the center of the slide.

C = Commit
Yourself to
Forgive
Publicly

- Worthington's intervention:
 - Write a certificate of forgiveness
 - Write a letter of forgiveness to the offender
 - Write a poem or song
 - Tell a friend what they have done
 - NOT encouraged to contact the offender!



H = Hold Onto Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is not erasure – memories of the event will recur
 - Forgiveness is a change in the tag lines that a memory carries
 - Memories of the event are NOT indicative that you haven't forgiven
 - Don't dwell vengefully on the memories, and don't wallow in them
 - Remind yourself that you have forgiven and read the documents you created where you wrote about forgiveness
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6 Steps for Forgiving Yourself





Enhancing Happiness in the Present



Module 2



The Pleasures

Bodily Pleasures

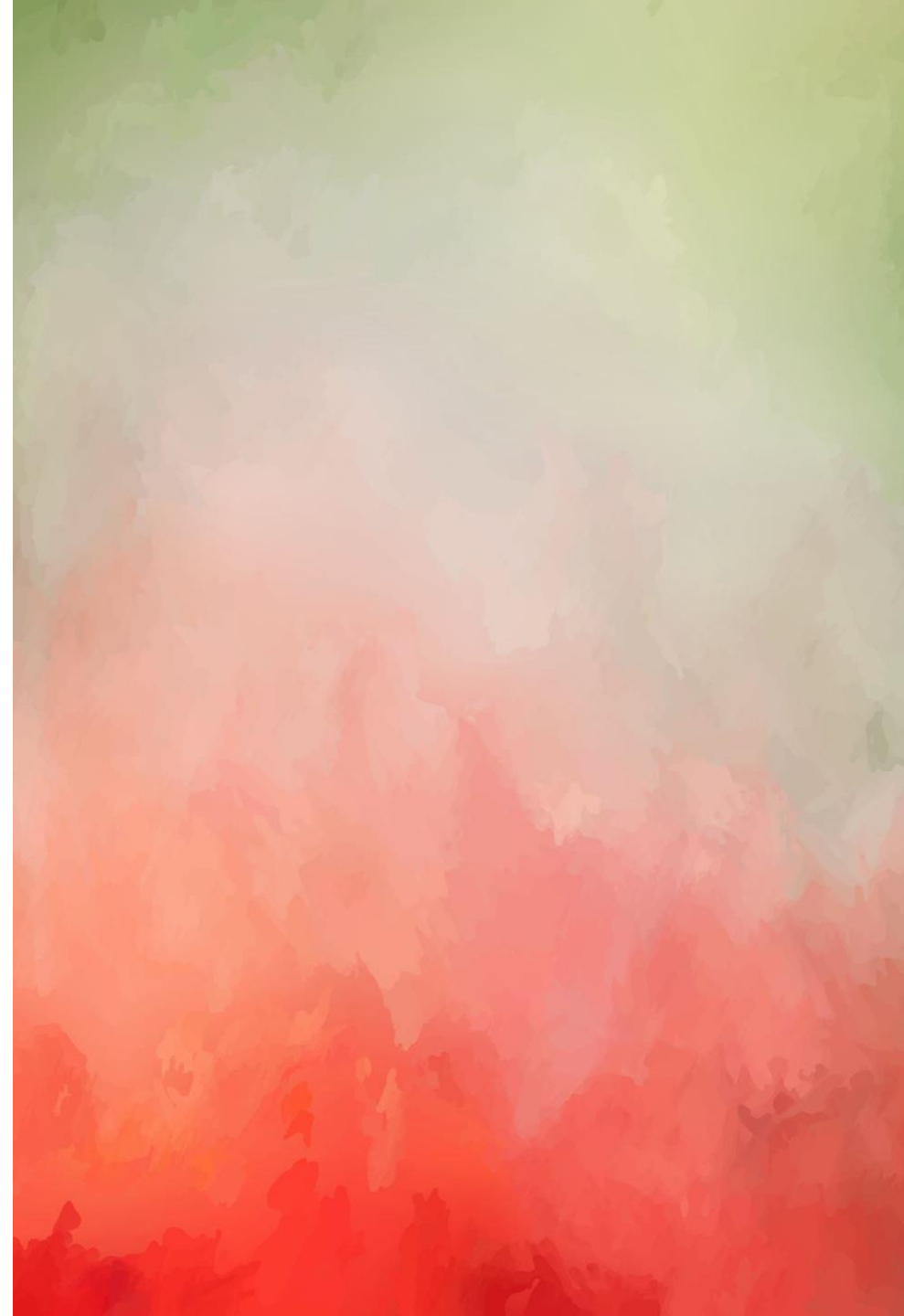
- Immediate
- Come through the senses
- Momentary
- Senses lead directly to positive emotion
- Habituation

Higher Pleasures

- **High-Intensity:** rapture, bliss, ecstasy, thrill, hilarity, euphoria, kick, buzz, elation, excitement
- **Moderate-Intensity:** ebullience, sparkle, vigor, glee, mirth, gladness, good cheer, enthusiasm, attraction, fun
- **Low-Intensity:** comfort, harmony, amusement, satiation, relaxation

Enhancing Pleasures

Strategy #1



Enhancing the Pleasures

- Counter habituation by spacing your pleasures and **entering into a surprise arrangement** with a friend or lover
- **Savoring**
 - Share your pleasures with someone else
 - Memory-building: Take mental photographs
 - Self-congratulation
 - Sharpening perceptions
 - Absorption
- **Mindfulness**



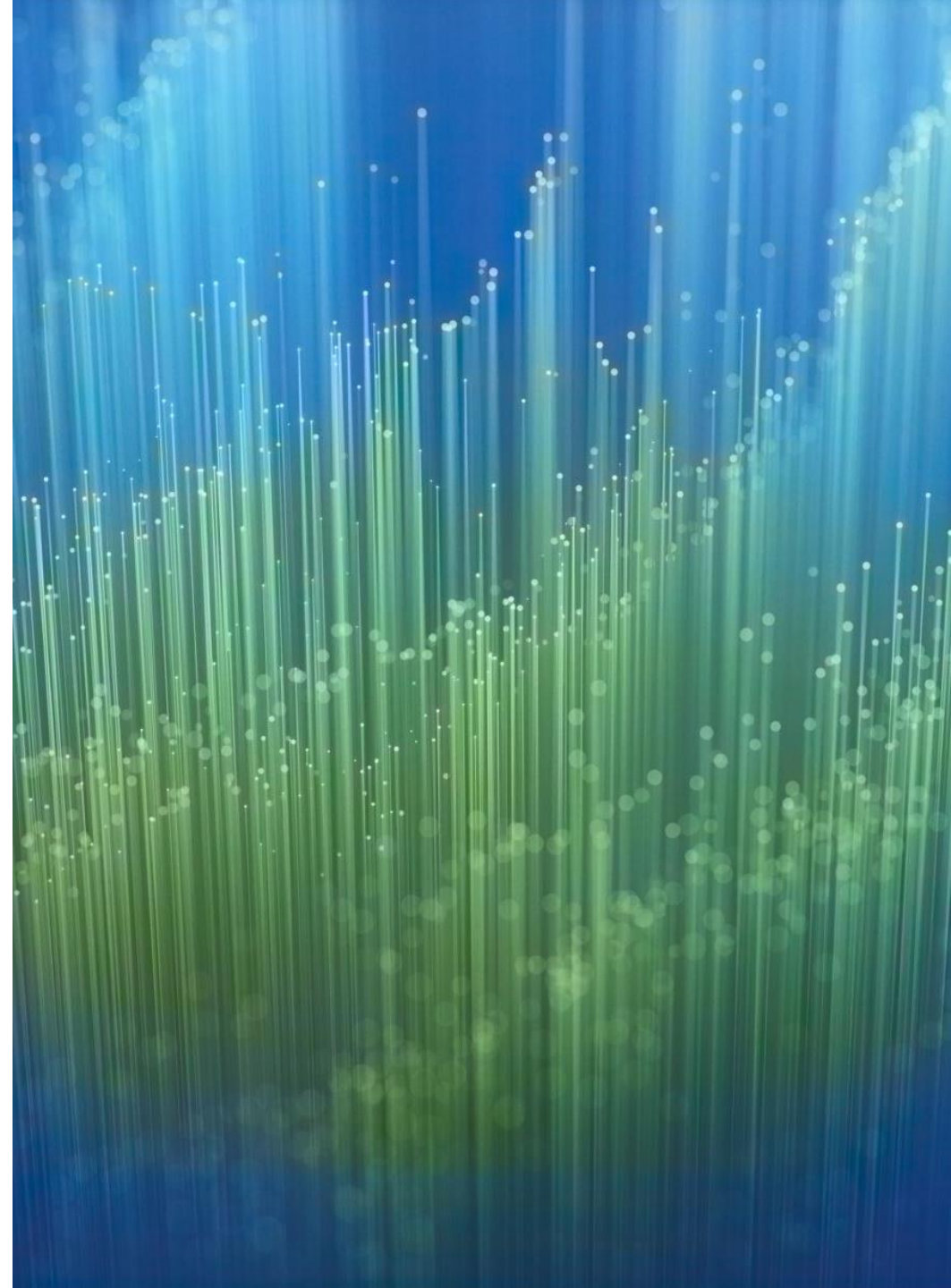
Types of Savoring

Basking: receiving praise and congratulations

Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for blessings

Marveling: losing the self in the wonder of the moment

Luxuriating: indulging the senses



Savoring

- Identify a happy, joyful, or pleasant event that happened to you
- Think about the people, smells, sounds, physical sensations, and sights that you experienced
- Try to re-create the positive emotions that you felt around the time of the event
- As you are savoring, let your thoughts wander to anything else about the happy experience that makes you feel good. Then, just mentally hold on to whatever feels good.
- Take a deep breath, and pay attention to how these emotions feel in your body. Let the emotions fade on their own, until you are ready to go back to whatever else you were doing.



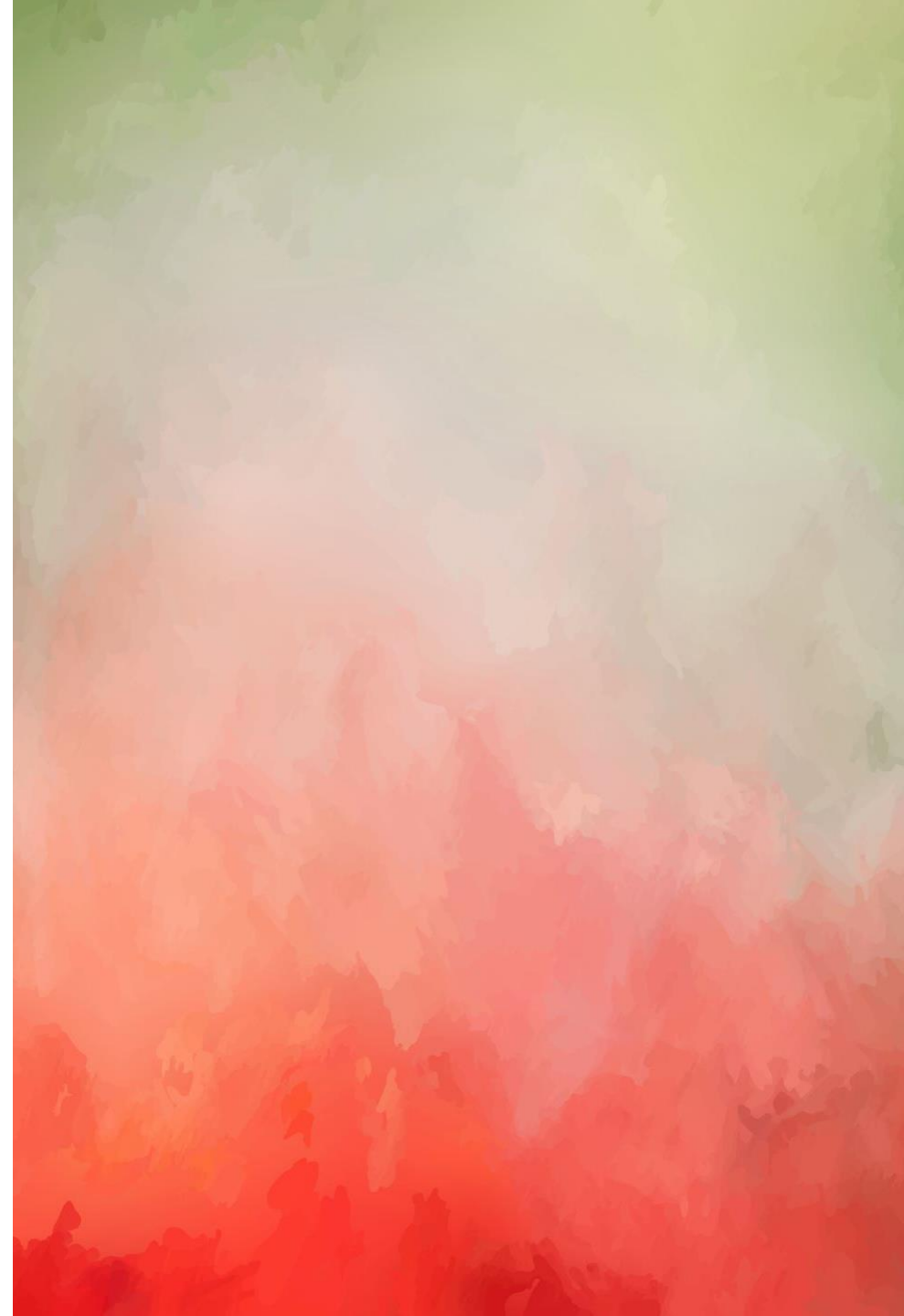
Have a Beautiful Day

- Set aside a free day to indulge your favorite pleasures
- Design what you will do, hour-to-hour
- 1 day every month



Enhancing Gratifications

Strategy #2





Flow

- State of mind spontaneously arises when we become immersed in an activity so completely that we lose track of time
- It has similarities with mindfulness because it requires focus in the present moment.
- the defining feature of a flow state of mind is intense experiential involvement in an activity that requires personal effort and skill
- A person's capacities are challenged by trying to meet a cherished goal
- If the task is too easy, apathy and boredom can set in, but if the task is too difficult, anxiety can arise

Essential Components of “Flow” Activities

- Challenge-Skill Balance: The task is challenging and requires skill
- Concentration on task at hand
- There are clear goals & unambiguous, immediate feedback
- We have deep, effortless involvement
- There is a sense of control (feel we can do anything, unstoppable)
- Our sense of self vanishes (free from self-monitoring)
- Transformation of time (time stops)
- Autotelic experience (intrinsically motivated to do task)



Finding Flow Activities (Kotler, 2021)

- **1. Identify your most enjoyable activity (*intrinsically* rewarding)**
 - e.g., Cooking, gardening, hiking, running, swimming, gaming, yoga, painting, crafts, etc.
 - Make sure to carve out enough time
 - **Minimum Dose:** Kotler (2021) recommends at least 90 minutes once or preferably twice a week to immerse yourself in the activity undistracted.
 - Elimination of distraction and multitasking are crucial for triggering a flow state
- **2. Identify your most focused time of day**
 - People vary – best in the morning, evening, after a nap, etc.
 - Take 5-minute breaks every 20-30 minutes
- **3. Choose a daily recovery time (Kotler, 2021)**
 - Ensure you have a segment of time every day when you completely detach from work and technology
 - You may do this by spending time with loved ones, watching a movie, walking your dog, or meditating. You might enjoy a combination of these things.

Examples

Music

- Listening to music
- Performance/playing
- One of the easiest ways to get into the flow state is by listening to music while exercising, which also boosts endurance (Karageorghis & Priest, 2012).

Gaming

- Due to the balance between the ability of the player and the difficulty of the game, concentration, direct feedback, clear goals, and control over the activity.

Learning

- Gamified learning can make it more enjoyable and interactive

Hobbies

- e.g., art, gaming, dancing, or rock climbing, we all have something we love doing regardless of external rewards!

Summary of Strategies

- Gratitude Diary (5 minutes daily, for 2 weeks)
- Forgiveness (REACH Method)
- Entering into a surprise arrangement with a friend or lover
- Savoring
- Mindfulness
- Have a Beautiful Day
- Identify and engage in “flow” activities (90 minutes, 1-2x/week)



References

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- REACH Forgiveness of Others. <http://www.evworthington-forgiveness.com/reach-forgiveness-of-others>