

How slow can you go?

Learning Center

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How does your garden grow?

Flourishing is when people experience positive emotions, positive psychological functioning, and positive social functioning, most of the time. Flourishing encompasses many feelings, activities, and thoughts that make people feel happy and complete. So, flourishing includes positive emotions, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose in life, close relationships, and often virtues like wisdom, courage, and kindness. Flourishing is similar to the idea of having optimal well-being. Flourishing is something you have control over. It is rooted in making positive choices. Flourishing is something that, when cultivated properly, lasts a lifetime.

How to Flourish

Given the many positive benefits of flourishing, you may want to build the skills to increase this experience in your life.

Savor

Savoring does not just refer to how one appreciates the taste of a meal—one can savor positive experiences by thinking about happy events, sharing or celebrating something good with others, and paying more attention to positive emotional experiences.

Imagine, and get to know, your best possible self (BPS)

Don't just think about your ideal life or the best possible version of yourself. Make a plan. Put ideas on paper, then create action steps. Makes these "do-able." "If I saved 15 percent of my take home pay each month, in three years I'd have enough money for a downpayment on a home."

I'd have enough money for a downpayment on a home.

Random acts of kindness

Doing things you wouldn't normally do to help others can have positive effects on multiple aspects of flourishing, like happiness and positive emotions. These acts can even inspire others to do the same.

Be yourself

Inauthenticity can occur when we focus too much on meeting other people's expectations. To be happier, we're better served by making sure that our actions represent us (e.g., Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Once we are being ourselves, we are free and can direct our energy toward flourishing.

Meet your needs, first

The theory known as **Self-Determination Theory** (SDT), was developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. It proposes that autonomy (having control), competence (feeling capable), and relatedness (feeling connected to others) are three innate and universal psychological needs that are essential for motivation, well-being, and psychological growth. Autonomy is the sense that we can choose our direction in life. Competence is the sense that we are effectively using our capabilities. Relatedness involves feeling socially connected to important others. According to **Basic Needs Theory**, these are the main things we need to feel happy and fulfilled (Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006).

Set meaningful goals

Setting meaningful life goals and working towards these goals can help us flourish (Emmons, 2003). *How?* Setting and working towards goals can help us better understand what really matters to us.

Believe in yourself

There is actually a lot of evidence that believing in something makes it more likely to come about (Benson & Friedman, 1996). Our positive expectations help lead us to positive outcomes. Start to optimistic about your ability to flourish.

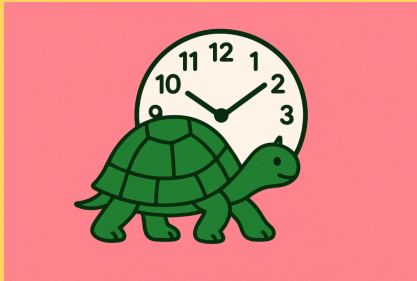
In Conclusion

Everyone wants to flourish. The skills needed take time, but with practice and patience, anyone can create a life that is full of meaning, happiness, and satisfaction.

References

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Aging is a process. One that can be slowed to a crawl.

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