

### **Positive Psychology**

Optimistic people are healthier and live longer. Pain may be a motivator for change, but hope is as well, and it is a more positive motivator.

Optimistic triad:

Permanency: The bad doesn't last, the good does.

Pervasiveness: Good affects everything; bad is localized and doesn't affect other parts of my life.

Personal: Good = Continually striving to maintain    Bad = Random

### **What to do**

For 21 days, write down three new things each day that you find positive or for which you are grateful. This trains your brain to look for the positive in your environment.

Take a step further, look at a challenging situation that you experienced and search for the "silver lining" to see how the experience may have actually benefitted you in some way.

Let someone know why you are grateful for him or her, preferably every day, by phone, text, e-mail, voice mail, a visit... this is also known as a random/planned act of kindness.

Journal on a positive experience from the past 24 hours. This allows your brain to relive it.

Exercise teaches your brain that your behavior really matters.

Exercise: Physical activity is approximately equal in effect to antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications. 10-30 minutes a day for depressive disorders and 30-60 minutes a day for anxiety disorders.

Meditation allows the brain to recover from "cultural ADHD" and focuses on the here and now, and being in the moment

Cortisol levels drop over 15 minutes of mindful meditation.

### **Build on Strengths**

Build on your top three strengths to promote happiness, confidence, and change. Do this by consciously increasing the amount of time and energy you give to your top strengths.

Set goals and talk about them in the present tense- describe what you are doing.

Lifestyle: Diet, Omega 3's, Mediterranean Diet

Mindfulness meditation

Autogenic training

Heart attack study: Optimistic men had half the heart attacks of pessimistic men.

Health, eating, and activity all controlled for.

Even a pessimist can develop a positive outlook.

Develop a social network: There are no "happy hermits."