



FLOURISH

A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being

BY MARTIN SELIGMAN • SIMON & SCHUSTER © 2011 • 368 PAGES
REIMAGINED FOR THE INVICTUS COMMUNITY

THE BIG IDEAS

WELL-BEING THEORY

vs. Authentic happiness theory — Positive Psychology 2.0

PERMA

Positive Emotion + Engagement + Relationships + Meaning + Achievement

STRENGTHS & VIRTUES

24 strengths underpin all five PERMA elements — VIA Survey

WHAT WENT WELL?

Powerful nightly exercise — 3 things + why

DEALING WITH IT

Live heroically — functioning well even when very sad

MORE ABCs + CHARACTER + GRIT

Beliefs about Adversity → Consequences • 10,000 hours • Self-discipline

OPTIMISTS vs PESSIMISTS + MEASURING WELL-BEING

Learned optimism • GDP vs Flourishing • New Prosperity

"This book will help you flourish. There, I have finally said it. I have spent my professional life avoiding unguarded promises like this one. I am a research scientist, and a conservative one at that. The appeal of what I write comes from the fact that it is grounded in careful science: statistical tests, validated questionnaires, thoroughly researched exercises, and large, representative samples. In contrast to pop psychology and the bulk of self-improvement, my writings are believable because of the underlying science." — Martin Seligman from Flourish

ABOUT THIS EDITION

Martin Seligman is one of the founding fathers of the positive psychology movement. This Invictus edition distills **Flourish** — Positive Psychology 2.0 — into practical tools for athletes, coaches, leaders, and high-performers. We move from chasing life satisfaction to building **flourishing** through evidence-based practice. At Invictus, optimal performance is tied to good well-being: the higher the positive morale, the better the performance.

As always, we're going to focus on a handful of favorite practical Big Ideas—stuff that you can immediately apply to your training, relationships, and life. We'll barely scratch the surface of this great book. For now, let's jump in!

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS THEORY → WELL-BEING THEORY

"I used to think that the topic of positive psychology was happiness, that the gold standard for measuring happiness was life satisfaction, and that the goal of positive psychology was to increase life satisfaction. I now think that the topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing. This theory, which I call well-being theory, is very different from authentic happiness theory, and the difference requires explanation." — Martin Seligman

An essential theme of this book is establishing the next version of Positive Psychology—what we call **Positive Psychology 2.0**. Whereas Positive Psychology 1.0 was focused on “Authentic Happiness” (the title of Seligman’s last book), Positive Psychology 2.0 is all about “Well-Being.”

Here's the chart from the book that helps us capture the difference:

Authentic Happiness Theory	Well-Being Theory
Topic: happiness	Topic: well-being
Measure: life satisfaction	Measures: positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment
Goal: increase life satisfaction	Goal: increase flourishing by increasing positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and accomplishment

The biggest thing we need to know about the shift? We've gotta keep in mind the acronym **PERMA**.

PERMA

"Here then is well-being theory: well-being is a construct; and well-being, not happiness, is the topic of positive psychology. Well-being has five measurable elements (PERMA) that count toward it: • Positive emotion (of which happiness and life satisfaction are all aspects) • Engagement • Relationships • Meaning • Achievement. No element defines well-being, but each contributes to it." — Martin Seligman

So, as we strive to develop our well-being and flourish, we want to keep PERMA in mind: **positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement**. At Invictus, we train all five — not just physical achievement, but mindset, connection, and purpose.

INVICTUS PERMA CHECK

- **P — Positive Emotion:** Cultivate joy, gratitude, hope daily
- **E — Engagement:** Get into flow — strengths meeting challenge
- **R — Relationships:** Who can you call at 4am? Invest there
- **M — Meaning:** Belong to and serve something bigger than self
- **A — Achievement:** Pursue mastery for its own sake

"Is there someone in your life whom you would feel comfortable phoning at four in the morning to tell your troubles to? If your answer is yes, you will likely live longer than someone whose answer is no." — Martin Seligman

"The entire thrust of this book is that optimal performance is tied to good well-being; the higher the positive morale, the better the performance." — Martin Seligman

STRENGTHS & VIRTUES

"In authentic happiness theory, the strengths and virtues—kindness, social intelligence, humor, courage, integrity, and the like (there are twenty-four of them)—are the supports for engagement. You go into flow when your highest strengths are deployed to meet the highest challenges that come your way. In well-being theory, these twenty-four strengths underpin all five elements, not just engagement: deploying your highest strengths leads to more positive emotion, to more meaning, to more accomplishment, and to better relationships." — Martin Seligman

If you only get one thing out of this Invictus Note, we recommend you identify your **signature strengths** and figure out how you can engage in them more often in your day-to-day life. Take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths at AuthenticHappiness.org or via characterstrengths.org. Over 1 million people from 200+ countries have taken it.

YOUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS — INVICTUS ASSESSMENT

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now, schedule some time over the next month when you can put those strengths into action — in training, at home, and in competition!

WHAT-WENT-WELL EXERCISE

"Every night for the next week, set aside ten minutes before you go to sleep. Write down three things that went well today and why they went well. You may use a journal or your computer to write about events, but it is important that you have a physical record of what you wrote. The three things need not be earthshaking in importance ("My husband picked up my favorite ice cream for dessert on the way home from work today"), but they can be important ("My sister just gave birth to a healthy baby boy"). Next to each positive event, answer the question "Why did this happen?" Writing about why the positive events in your life happened may seem awkward at first, but please stick with it for one week. It will get easier. The odds are that you will be less depressed, happier, and addicted to this exercise six months from now." — Martin Seligman

Seligman outlines a number of awesome positive psychology exercises that we scientifically *know* boost happiness. This one's big. Let's get the ball rolling now.

INVICTUS PRACTICE — WHAT WENT WELL TODAY AND WHY?

1. _____

This is why: _____

2. _____

This is why: _____

3. _____

This is why: _____

"We scientists have found that doing a kindness produces the single most reliable momentary increase in well-being of any exercise we have tested... Here is the exercise: find one wholly unexpected kind thing to do tomorrow and just do it. Notice what happens to your mood." — Martin Seligman

DEALING WITH IT

"Think about Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill, two severe depressives. They were both enormously well-functioning human beings who dealt with their "black dogs" and their suicidal thoughts. (Lincoln came close to killing himself in January 1841.) Both learned to function extremely well even when they were massively depressed. So one thing that clinical psychology needs to develop in light of the heritable stubbornness of human pathologies is a psychology of "dealing with it." We need to tell our patients, "Look, the truth is that many days—no matter how successful we are in therapy—you will wake up feeling blue and thinking life is hopeless. Your job is not only to fight these feelings but also to live heroically: functioning well even when you are very sad." — Martin Seligman

Amen to that. Seligman offers this wisdom in the context of sharing his own challenges with pessimism, telling us that "Strong biological underpinnings predispose some of us to sadness, anxiety, and anger" and that it is likely that these traits "can only be ameliorated, not wholly eliminated."

That's really important. For many of us, we're never going to totally get rid of the unpleasant thoughts and feelings. As we realize those gremlins are gonna be there throughout our lives, our job becomes, as Seligman puts it: **"not only to fight these feelings but also to live heroically: functioning well even when you are very sad."**

This reminds us of the wisdom from Constructive Living, where David Reynolds tells us: "The mature human being goes about doing what needs to be done regardless of whether that person feels great or terrible. Knowing that you are the kind of person with that kind of self-control brings all the satisfaction and confidence you will ever need. Even on days when the satisfaction and confidence just aren't there, you can get the job done anyway."

Here's to living heroically and doing what needs to be done regardless of whether we're feeling great or terrible — the Invictus way: Unconquered.

MORE ABC's

"First, students learn the ABC model: how beliefs (B) about an adversity (A)—and not the adversity itself—cause the consequent (C) feelings. This is a point of major insight for students: emotions don't follow inexorably from external events but from what you think about those events, and you can actually change what you think." — Martin Seligman

The ABCs of effective living. We talk about this ALL. THE. TIME at Invictus: **beliefs (B) about an adversity (A)—and not the adversity itself—cause the consequent (C) feelings.**

Those ABCs are the first thing students at a school in Australia learned from Seligman and his team who introduced “positive education” into the curriculum. Back to you: How are your ABCs? Are you blaming an adversity for your emotional state? Or, do you realize it's your beliefs about that challenge that are determining how you feel? As always, let's step between stimulus and response and CHOOSE a more empowering set of beliefs about what's going on!

CHARACTER AND 10,000 HOURS

"Ericsson has argued that the cornerstone of all high expertise is not God-given genius but deliberate practice: the amount of time and energy you spend in deliberate practice. Mozart was Mozart not primarily because he had a unique gift for music but because from toddlerhood, he spent all his time using his gift. World-class chess players are not faster of thought, nor do they have unusually good memories for moves. Rather they have so much experience that they are vastly better at recognizing patterns in chess positions than lesser chess players—and this comes from the sheer amount of their experience. World-class piano soloists log 10,000 hours of solo practice by age twenty, in contrast to 5,000 hours for the next level of pianist, and in contrast to 2,000 hours for merely serious amateur pianists. The prototype of deliberate practice is one of Ericsson's graduate students, Choa Lu, who holds the Guinness World Record for the amazing number of pi he memorized: 67,890! The advice that follows is straightforward: if you want to become world class at anything, you must spend 60 hours a week on it for ten years. What determines how much time and deliberate practice a child is willing to devote to achievement? Nothing less than her character." — Martin Seligman

Seligman dedicates a chapter to "Grit, Character, and Achievement" where he describes the work done by one of his students, Angela Lee Duckworth. Grit — essentially intense passion + intense persistence — is the stuff greatness is made of.

"If we want to maximize the achievement of children, we need to promote self-discipline. My favorite social psychologist, Roy Baumeister, believes it is the queen of all the virtues, the strength that enables the rest of the strengths. There is, however, an extreme trait of self-discipline: GRIT. Indeed, Angela went on to explore grittiness, the combination of very high persistence and high passion for an objective." — Martin Seligman

"Self-discipline outpredicts IQ for academic success by a factor of 2." — Martin Seligman

"By some estimates, depression is about ten times more common now than it was fifty years ago." — Martin Seligman

"In the nineteenth century, politics, morality, and psychology were all about character." — Martin Seligman

OPTIMISTS VS. PESSIMISTS

"We wanted to find out who never became helpless, so we looked systematically at the way that the people whom we could not make helpless interpreted bad events. We found that people who believe that the causes of setbacks in their lives are temporary, changeable, and local do not become helpless readily in the laboratory. When assailed with inescapable noise in the laboratory or with rejection in love, they think, It's going away quickly, I can do something about it, and it's just this one situation. They bounce back quickly from setbacks, and they do not take a setback at work home. We call them optimists. Conversely, people who habitually think, It's going to last forever, it's going to undermine everything, and there's nothing I can do about it, become helpless readily in the laboratory. They do not bounce back from defeat, and they take their marital problems into their jobs. We call them pessimists." — Martin Seligman

Seligman wrote an entire book on the difference called *Learned Optimism* where he describes: "Learned helplessness is the giving up reaction, the quitting response that follows from the belief that whatever you do doesn't matter. Explanatory style is the manner in which you habitually explain to yourself why events happen. It is the great modulator of learned helplessness. An optimistic explanatory style stops helplessness, whereas a pessimistic explanatory style spreads helplessness."

The very good news is that we can **LEARN** to be optimistic. "Unlike dieting, learned optimism is easy to maintain once you start. Once you get into the habit of disputing negative beliefs, your daily life will run much better, and you will feel much happier." — Martin Seligman

"All that is required to become an optimist is to have the goal and to practice it. The more you rehearse optimistic thoughts, the more 'natural' and 'ingrained' they will become. With time they will be part of you, and you will have made yourself into an altogether different person." — Sonja Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*

"We estimate that being in the upper quartile of optimism seems to have a beneficial effect on cardiovascular risk roughly equivalent to not smoking two packs of cigarettes daily." — Martin Seligman

"As Nietzsche tells us, good philosophy always says, 'Change your life!'" — Martin Seligman

MEASURING GDP VS. WELL-BEING

"Gross domestic product measures the volume of goods and services that are produced and consumed, and any events that increase that volume increase the GDP. It does not matter if those events happen to decrease the quality of life. Every time there is a divorce, the GDP goes up. Every time two automobiles collide, the GDP goes up. The more people who scarf down antidepressants, the more the GDP goes up. More police protection and longer commutes to work raise the GDP even though they may lower the quality of life. Economists, humorlessly, call these "regrettables." Cigarette sales and casino profits are included in the GDP. Some entire industries, such as law, psychotherapy, and drugs, prosper as misery increases. This is not to say that lawyers, psychotherapists, and drug companies are bad, but rather that GDP is blind when it comes to whether it is human suffering or human thriving that increases the volume of goods and services. This divergence between well-being and gross domestic product can be quantified. Life satisfaction in the United States has been flat for fifty years even though GDP has tripled. Even scarier, measures of ill-being have not declined as gross domestic product has increased; they have gotten much worse. Depression rates have increased tenfold over the last fifty years in the United States. This is true of every wealthy nation, and, importantly, it is not of poor nations." — Martin Seligman

"But what is wealth for, anyway? The goal of wealth, in my view, is not just to produce more wealth but to engender flourishing." — Martin Seligman

This is all part of a much longer chat but Seligman concludes the book with a chapter called "The Politics and Economics of Well-Being" where he talks about the opportunities of "Positive Business" and the need to find a better way to keep score of how we're doing on a national and global level that combines both wealth AND well-being. He calls it the "New Prosperity."

The bottom line: We need to make the cultivation of well-being an integral part of every aspect of our lives and culture—from business and media to government and education! At Invictus, we live this: **Unconquered Mind • Unconquered Body • Unconquered Life.**

THE INVICTUS TAKEAWAY — FLOURISH WITH PERMA

Well-being is a construct. No single element defines it, but each contributes: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement. Measure your days by PERMA, not just by productivity or GDP. Practice What-Went-Well nightly, dispute pessimistic beliefs with ABC, train grit through deliberate practice, and choose optimism.

At Invictus Sports Performance & Fitness, optimal performance is tied to good well-being — the higher the positive morale, the better the performance.

INVICTUS SPORTS PERFORMANCE & FITNESS
UNCONQUERED MIND • UNCONQUERED BODY • UNCONQUERED LIFE