

The Vanguard of Positive Psychology Defined

PERMA, Positivity, 10 Positive Emotions, Love, and Positivity Resonance are extremely important topics you often read about as some of the vanguard topics of Positive Psychology (PP). Below I define each and give you some fun, doable applications/activities for your PP learning pleasure.

In Marty Seligman's classic book, [Flourish](#), he describes a backbone acronym for flourishing, **PERMA**:

Positive Emotions

Engagement

Relationships, Positive

Meaning

Accomplishment

Other researchers have added H for Health and/or V for Vitality. You may see PERMA-H or PERMA-V in your readings. It is noteworthy **Positive Emotions (PE's)** are listed first. You may also notice PERMA-S suggested by our own MCP [trainer, Steve Coxsey](#), the S for Self-Care. They are essential for thriving, flourishing and finding happiness and meaning as you journey through life. They are the basis for positivity. See my attached PowerPoint for more PERMA learning pleasure.

I. What is Positivity?

Positivity defined by Fredrickson (who Seligman labels "The genius of PP),
"Consists of the whole range of positive emotions - from appreciation to love, from amusement to joy, from hope to gratitude, and then some. The term is purposefully broad. It includes the positive meanings and optimistic attitudes that trigger positive emotions as well as open minds, tender hearts, relaxed limbs, and soft faces they enter in. It even includes the long-term impact that positive emotions have on your character, relationships, community, and environment."

Positivity is NOT "Grin and bear it" or "happiology". Her research is based on science. She tells us we need to work on developing our positive emotions and to actively learn ways to add mindfulness of them to our everyday life. Enter Positive Psychology Interventions.

Not that Fredrickson dismisses feeling negative emotions. But to "**Broaden and Build**" feelings of optimism, resilience and well-being, experiencing what is going RIGHT about your life supersedes what is not going right. Rather than a strict 3:1 ratio of positive to negative emotions as she first reported, Fredrickson now says to just be sure you have much more positive emotions than negative.

Positivity delightfully enhances and improves the quality of your life. Here's how:

1. It FEELS good! It's a gift you give yourself.
2. It changes how your mind works.. It expands your problem-solving.. It helps you re-frame negative into positive. Example: If you have a delay with your flight, you tell yourself, "Now I have time to read my book!"
3. It transforms your future. Good feelings ARE great, but they are fleeting. You accrue positive emotions. PE's set the stage for you to continue to LOOK, FIND, and FEEL the 10 PE's. They build emotional and physical stamina. You sleep better, too. To savor more, increase your optimism, and become more resilient.
4. it helps you with social relations as you connect with family, friends and co-workers. Your smiles become contagious and all parties benefit. Remember mirror neurons? And micro-moments of happiness as you gaze into another's eyes? Think of flash mobs and the joy you see.
5. It obeys a tipping point that is different for every person. Know your REACTIVITY. The more you practice the positivity habit, the richer your life will be. You develop your own sweet spots to increase your upward spiral to more peak moments to treasure. You are creating your happiness and meaning legacy to savor now to to positively reminiscence about in the future. Life-enhancing at its best!

II. What are 10 Positive Emotions PE's researched by Barbara Fredrickson?

Joy, Gratitude, Serenity, Interest, Awe, Amusement, Hope, Pride, Inspiration, and the grand daddy combination of all these emotions, Love.

A reminder: What you focus on grows. PE's help you up-spiral LOVE as well as increase overall positivity.

Attached is a handy Positive Emotion chart you and your clients might use. Have them print it out or to keep track on their tech devices. Thanks to trainer [Gayle Scroggs](#) for the lovely formatting.

So how do you harness the 10 PE's?

To engage what brings Fredrickson's 10 positive emotions into your psyche, first ask, "How does this PE's activity resonate with me? How does it fit my values? How does it augment my positivity?" This will make sure it matches your wants and needs. When you coach a client, remember to ask permission to kindly challenge them, so they may choose what works for them.

Here are directions for two Positive Psychology Interventions/Activities (PPI's) to increase Positive Emotions:

1. Ask your clients to choose one emotion they want to focus on for a week. Ask them to keep a mindfully aware attitude about that emotion. Keep that chosen emotion-spotting goal in the forefront of their day. Ask them to savor the experience of it. To be consciously mindful.

Have them tally each time they notice that emotion arise each day.

For example, if they choose JOY, you might ask them to put a post-it note on objects around the house that bring them joy. Or to journal joyful interactions with others. Or to notice something humorously joyful. Or do an activity that brings them joy. Maybe baking cookies with their kids and donating them to an organization. Simple pleasures maximized by awareness and writing it down to anchor it to their brain.

Hint: Ask them to mobilize all five senses. This gives them a solid structure to make this simple activity even easier.

In your coaching sessions, discuss how this emotion-spotting expanded their overall positivity and flourishing. The "Why did this exercise work for you?" This is a powerful question based on neuroscience. This discussion retrains the brain to

develop more lasting mindful awareness to look for the good. Also, it's fun to celebrate their new awareness with your client.

This activity is a great accompaniment to Body Centered Coaching. You might ask them when and where they noticed/experienced this PE awareness. They may mention In their head, heart and/or gut. You often get fascinating, rich information that increases their awareness and forwards the motion towards their PE goal to notice what is good in life.

You can add more fun and double the pleasure of this exercise if you ask them to notice a *strength* along with their chosen positive emotion. For example, like using *courage* to run a full marathon that brings them *joy* as they raise money for a charity.

2. Photography shines light on Positive Emotions!

Directions: Choose a PE you want to develop to rev up for positivity. Mindfully take photos of activities or objects that instill your chosen emotion. You might spend a day or a week or whatever you choose capturing your designated PE. Revel in all the sensory aspects of each photo. Really enjoy what arises within you.

Add a double delight. Strength-spotting: Notice what strengths you captured in your in photos. Did you notice Beauty and Excellence? Kindness? Gratitude? What others?

Strengths often add power to Positive Emotion awareness. And Positive Emotions may work in tandem to help you notice your strengths, too. How cool is that?

Note: In general, taking photos usually increases enjoyment of the experience. But be mindful of these caveats: Research warns that increased enjoyment only occurs for pictures of positive events and experiences. People who took photos of negative events felt worse! If the experience is *already* engaging, there may be no additional psychological gain. Also, be careful not to let taking photographs interfere with you enjoying the experience in the moment.

III. What is the new scientific definition of *Love*? What is *Positivity Resonance*? (Excerpts from Maria Popova's article linked below):

"First and foremost, *love is an emotion*, a momentary state that arises to infuse your mind and body alike. Love, like all emotions, surfaces like a distinct and fast-moving weather pattern, a subtle and ever-shifting force. As for all positive emotions, the inner feeling love brings you is inherently and exquisitely pleasant — it feels extraordinarily good, the way a long, cool drink of water feels when you're parched on a hot day. Yet far beyond feeling good, a *micro-moment of love*, like other positive emotions, literally changes your mind. It expands your

awareness of your surroundings, even your sense of self. The boundaries between you and not-you — what lies beyond your skin — relax and become more permeable. While infused with love you see fewer distinctions between you and others. Indeed, your ability to see others — really see them, wholeheartedly — springs open. Love can even give you a palpable sense of oneness and connection, a transcendence that makes you feel part of something far larger than yourself.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, love is far more ubiquitous than you ever thought possible for the simple fact that *love is connection*. It's that poignant stretching of your heart that you feel when you gaze into a newborn's eyes for the first time or share a farewell hug with a dear friend. It's even the fondness and sense of shared purpose you might unexpectedly feel with a group of strangers who've come together to marvel at a hatching of sea turtles or cheer at a football game. The new take on love that I want to share with you is this: *Love blossoms virtually anytime two or more people — even strangers — connect over a shared positive emotion, be it mild or strong.*

Fredrickson zooms in on three key neurobiological players in the game of love — *your brain, your levels of the hormone oxytocin, and your vagus nerve*, which connects your brain to the rest of your body — and examines their interplay as the core mechanism of love, summing up:

Scientific definitions of Love and Postivity Resonance:

Love is a momentary upwelling of three tightly interwoven events: first, a sharing of one or more positive emotions between you and another; second, a synchrony between your and the other person's biochemistry and behaviors; and third, a reflected motive to invest in each other's well-being that brings mutual care.

She shorthands this trio 'positivity resonance' — a concept similar to **limbic revision**— and likens the process to a mirror in which you and your partner's emotions come into sync, reflecting and reinforcing one another: This is no ordinary moment. Within this mirrored reflection and extension of your own state, you see far more. A powerful back-and-forth union of energy springs up between the two of you, like an electric charge.

What makes 'positivity resonance' so compelling a concept and so arguably richer than traditional formulations of “love” is precisely this back-and-forthness and the inclusiveness implicit to it.

Fredrickson cautions against our simplistic view of love, common in the individualistic cultures of the West:

Odds are, if you were raised in a Western culture, you think of emotions as largely private events. you locate them within a person's boundaries, confined within their mind and skin. When conversing about emotions, your use of singular possessive adjectives betrays this point of view. You refer to 'my anxiety,' 'his anger,' or 'her interest.' Following this logic, love would seem to belong to the person who feels it. Defining love as positivity resonance challenges this view. Love unfolds and reverberates between and among people —

within interpersonal transactions — and thereby belong to all parties involved, and to the metaphorical connective tissue that binds them together, albeit temporarily. ... More than any other positive emotion, then, love belongs not to one person, but to pairs or groups of people. It resides within connections. Love's second precondition is connection, true sensory and temporal connection with another living being. You no doubt try to 'stay connected' when physical distance keeps you and your loved ones apart. You use the phone, e-mail, and increasingly texts or Facebook, and it's important to do so. Yet your body, sculpted by the forces of natural selection over millennia, was not designed for the abstractions of long-distance love, the XOXs and LOLs. Your body hungers for more.

True connection is one of love's bedrock prerequisites, a prime reason that **love is not unconditional, but instead requires a particular stance**. Neither abstract nor mediated, true connection is physical and unfolds in real time. It requires sensory and temporal co-presence of bodies. The main mode of sensory connection, scientists contend, is **eye contact**. Other forms of real-time sensory contact — through touch, voice, or mirrored body postures and gestures — no doubt connect people as well and at times can substitute for eye contact. Nevertheless, eye contact may well be the most potent trigger for connection and oneness.

Physical presence is key to love, to positivity resonance.

While Fredrickson argues for positivity resonance as a phenomenon that can blossom between any set of people, not just lovers, she takes care to emphasize the essential factor that separates intimate love from other love: time.

Love is a many-splendored thing. This classic saying is apt, not only because love can emerge from the shoots of any other positive emotion you experience, be it amusement, serenity, or gratitude, but also because of your many viable collaborators in love, ranging from our sister to your soul mate, your newborn to your neighbor, even someone you've never met before.

At the level of positivity resonance, *micro-moments of love* are virtually identical regardless of whether they bloom between you and a stranger or you and a soul mate; between you and an infant or you and your lifelong best friend. The clearest difference between the love you feel with intimates and the love you feel with anyone with whom you share a connection is its sheer frequency. Spending more total moments together increases your chances to feast on micro-moments of positivity resonance. These micro-moments change you.

Whereas the *biological synchrony* that emerges between connected brains and bodies may be comparable no matter who the other person may be, the triggers for your micro-moments of love can be wholly different with intimates. The hallmark feature of intimacy is *mutual responsiveness*, that reassuring sense that you and your soul mate — or you and your best friend — really 'get' each other. This means that you come to your interactions with a well-developed understanding of each other's inner workings, and you use that privileged knowledge thoughtfully, for each other's benefit. Intimacy is that safe and comforting feeling you get when you can bask in the knowledge that this other person truly understands and appreciates you. You can relax in this person's presence and let your guard down. Your mutual sense of trust, perhaps reinforced

by your commitments of loyalty to each other, allows each of you to be more open with each other than either of you would be elsewhere."

IV. More Resources: Check out Fredrickson's great books, [LOVE 2.0](#) and [Positivity](#) for more information. As an adjunct to this intervention, check out Sonja Lyubromsky's sage book, "[The How of Happiness](#)". You will find many more PPI's examples. Also see Maria Popova's great article on Love and Positivity Resonance quoted here. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/01/28/love-2-0-barbara-fredrickson/>

V. Do the "[Person-Activity Fit Diagnostic](#)" assessment to see which PPI's suit you best. See why *variety* is key. Why being *specific* tops being general (remember SMART goals?). Why putting forth *consistent effort* added your interest (remember this necessity for GRIT?) helps you achieve your PPI goals.

No matter what the chosen PPI, kindly remind your clients:

1. It needs to be natural.
2. You need to enjoy it.
3. It needs to serve your values.
4. No guilt allowed!
5. It needs to be come from you and reflects who you are. It is not externally, situation-driven.

Want more PPI's?

Please visit my website blog at <http://www.coachingpositivity.com>

To your joyful positivity enhancement!