

Rainer Cabance

Professor Sabantino Magini

English 112

22 November 2018

Something to Smile About

Introduction

It's almost the weekend and I just managed to pick up my son from his mother's house. While driving back home, suddenly, I heard a loud noise and I had lost steering for a brief period of time. Worried with confusion because my son was in the car, I then pulled over and noticed that my tire popped and lost air. Usually, when things like this happen, I would moan and groan for a couple of minutes until I could get my composure. However, today was different and I was thankful. My thought patterns were being re-written because I'm trying to find something good of this. I could not believe this, but I was glad this happened while the weather was nice and warm. Weird, right? I have felt this sense of gratitude recently because I was practicing the "three good things," or gratitude for our class where we wrote three good things by the end of the day. Although, I might have changed the way I feel that day, what about tomorrow, next week, months? I then concluded at that time that if I continued to practice "the three good things" tomorrow, next week, and months to come, that maybe I can be rewrite life in a positive light. The three good things gratitude process did have a positive impact on my well-being as I continued to practice and apply it for the days to come. However, can this gratitude process "three good things," impact and have a positive role for my well-being?

Literature Review

First, we need to look at what is positive psychology? As Dr. Martin Seligman often is referred to and credited as the "father of positive psychology," Dr. Seligman definition of positive psychology is what I will use. According to Dr. Seligman along with the University of

Pennsylvania “Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play” (2018). Over the past, Dr. Seligman studied depression and the prevention of depression which later builds on well-being.

What is well-being? This definition is very broad in the psychological field; however, Dr. Seligman’s version is more refine towards my argument. As Dr. Seligman talks about his model Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement (PERMA) which is his scientific finding and prevention for depression. This study support giving gratitude and state of feeling of gratitude is very essential for well-being.

What is gratitude? According to Psychology Today, “Gratitude is an emotion expressing appreciation for what one has—as opposed to, for instance, a consumer-driven emphasis on what one wants or thinks they need” (2018). Although according to Psychology Today receiving gratitude is beneficial just as if you give gratitude. In other words, I should apply giving just as much as receiving.

Findings

In this section, I will prove that three good things did improve my well-being. But first, how I conducted the three good things. I started by having a time frame. For a whole week and at least ten minutes a day, I needed to write down three good things that have happened during the day. I chose the last ten minutes of my day to start and end this process. This is the time where I summed up what had happened during the day and focused on the good side. In a journal or piece of paper I wrote the date, followed by the three good things that made it better or showing gratitude to what happened, and why I

felt gratitude. I did this every day for a week and noticed that I felt better and focused more and expected more good things to come as the days went by. This is what I came up with during the first week.

October 30, 2018

- 1.) I'm so tired at work and I fell asleep, however, no one noticed.
- 2.) My car got a flat tire, but I was very happy that it happened few blocks from a Walmart with an auto care.
- 3.) The officers at work were getting mandated to stay but I got off work without any problems.

October 31, 2018

- 1.) I found another good book for my brain injury this might help me get better.
- 2.) I have read a good portion of the book while at work, no one noticed.
- 3.) My friends are always sending me funny things like pictures, jokes, porn, etc. some of my friends are also my work bosses.

November 1, 2018

- 1.) I went to the gym early and now I have the whole day to relax.
- 2.) I have school in the morning but once I get done school it became my weekend.
- 3.) I couldn't fall asleep, and so managed to get a lot of chores done.

November 2, 2018

- 1.) I'm glad my son and his brother are coming over, I barely see my son and his brother since I broke up with my ex-fiancé.
- 2.) It's payday and I'm always glad my pockets are full.
- 3.) I finally got eight hours of sleep, even though it was throughout the day and broken into segments it's still eight hours.

November 3, 2018

- 1.) I slept for five hours straight, the government gave me sleeping pills and will keep refilling them.
- 2.) My son didn't show up today because he is sick, and so I got more chores around the house.
- 3.) I'm at 90% disability rating because of Iraq but soon it will be 100% and I could retire early or finally start my business.

November 4, 2018

- 1.) My son is still healing so I got to rest again.
- 2.) Watched some Ted talk on YouTube, it's very enlightening and I'm always glad I'm learning something new.
- 3.) Today is a cheat day, so I ate a whole box of pizza.

Now I needed to figure out if this gratitude process “three good things,” could impact and have a positive role for my well-being. For myself, I have noticed that I felt better, and I also wanted to know why I felt better. When the week ended the class came together and found out that the practice does work but acquiring PERMA into the process must be included because all aspects of life according to Dr. Seligman study will have a better impact on well-being. As it turns out PERMA can be measured and have a graded value. In my PERMA graded results, I have concluded that I spent a lot of time achieving Positive Emotions, like trying to get sleep, going to the gym, watching YouTube videos, etc. My relationship and accomplishment were very low as a result. So now after evaluating my score I need to add a little more in relationship category and flow for my accomplishment. But why did I start feeling better? According to Dr. Bryan Sexton PhD., “We are hardwired as human-beings to find the negative things as a learning curve for survival.” So, looking in a biological standpoint, I threw out and forget the good things that comes from the day such as friendly support from friends and family, a flat tire but an auto-repair just a few blocks away, or getting a good night sleep in a warm bed, etc. Instead I would remember the boss telling me that I need to stay longer for work or arguing with my ex fiancé because my

son is being raised not the way I wanted him to. So now how can I improve my Accomplishments.

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi flow is the answer. After, the destruction caused by World War II, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wanted to know why some people that were affected by the war seem to be happier and unaffected even with all the trauma and aftermath. In his study he found that our nervous system is incapable of processing more than 110 bits of information per second, 60 bits is the average (2004). Csikszentmihalyi found that when people are in flow, their body does not have time to process how they feel, problems at home, how tired, or even hungry they are. Which also explains why some people will be so involved with work, playing video games, reading, etc. for hours because they love what they are doing. That's why Dr. Seligman incorporate flow into his PERMA model. After learning this, I also incorporated flow with my weekly routine to help improve my well-being.

Conclusion

After assessing the flat tire and noticing that I don't have the right tools to replace a spare tire. I continued to drive to the nearest Walmart, which was just two blocks down from where I popped my tire. As I wait and shopped for supplies at Walmart while a new tire is installed, I felt relieved and smiled. The feeling of gratitude and practice of the three good things did have an impact on my well-being. Though the three good things are enough alone, amplify this with PERMA and flow will give a greater result. Gratitude after a having a flat tire and avoiding traffic with my son in the back of my car was not normal. However, I felt better not dwelling on the present negative emotion and having a brighter outlook on the situation. Will I continue to practice the three good things? I think that time will tell but for now my answer is a definite yes because I am rewriting my life in practicing the three good things. My well-being is at an all-time high and approaching difficult situation with a smile and good feelings is always better than just complaining, whining, and dwelling on it.

Work Cited

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