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Positive emotions: an informational workshop

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POSITIVE EMOTIONS: AN INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

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A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

_____

by

Rebecca M. Kessler

August 2011

This research project, completed by

REBECCA M. KESSLER

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date   August 2011

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ii

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to design and evaluate an educational intervention focusing on the role of positive emotions in the workplace. An informational workshop was delivered to the full staff of 18 teachers and 2 directors at Circle of Children Preschool in Santa Monica, California, and emphasized positive emotions and their implications in the workplace in an effort to enhance awareness of emotions and inspire increased levels of positive emotions. A sample set of the staff evaluated the workshop and its effectiveness. The sample was surveyed and interviewed for levels of positive emotions prior to the workshop and, again, after the workshop for a comparison of possible change in levels of positive emotions. Findings were varied. Quantitative survey results showed a slight decline in levels of positive emotions, whereas qualitative interviews acknowledged positive effects in both understanding the value of positive emotions and inspiring a shift towards a more positive outlook in the workplace.

Acknowledgements

"People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be." Abraham Lincoln (n.d.)

I would like to dedicate this thesis to those people who choose to be positive as much as humanly possible, for the radiant energy they exude that helps to light the lives of so many who struggle with that choice. I would like to specifically acknowledge my aunt Debb Anderson; my coworker Hillary Baum; and my dear friend Kat Belloli. Thank you for the influence of your unyielding optimism.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of my boss, Michele Gathrid, who allowed the setting for this research. Big thanks to my fantastically patient and loving family and friends who kept me sane throughout this process. Thank you to all the participants of this study for your willingness to share your experiences. Lastly, I would like to thank my classmates Teresa Lara and Soumya Naidu for your commitment to our friendship that I hope lasts a lifetime.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

"The aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life" (Seligman, 2002, p. 3). This is where a growing portion of the field of psychology is going, but not historically where it has been.

Negative emotions have long been at the forefront of the field of psychology. Diagnoses such as depression and anxiety, along with their implications, have been actively documented for the last 150 years. Like other fields of study such as medicine and business, psychology has been focused almost exclusively on troubleshooting problems.

> It [psychology] concentrated on repairing damage using a disease model of human functioning. This almost exclusive attention to pathology neglected the idea of a fulfilled individual and a thriving community, and it neglected the possibility that building strength is the most potent weapon in the arsenal of therapy. (Seligman, 2002, p. 3)

Excluding the last decade, the most popular workplace-related studies concern stress and burnout, violations of psychological contracts, workplace violence, job insecurity, and downsizing (Turner, Barling, & Zacharatos, 2002). This information is relevant and helpful certainly, but failing to recognize the positive aspects of work in research is insufficient. In contrast, the University of Michigan's Center for Positive Organization Scholarship emphasizes a positive approach to organization research by developing a resource of ongoing success stories, generative capabilities, and best practices in human communities.

It should be said that the emphasis on negative symptoms has led to an incredible body of work in the field of psychology and, in turn, we have a greater understanding of

the role that emotions play in our lives. Though our lives may be enriched by this knowledge, there is another end of the spectrum that, until recently, has been almost entirely ignored. Positive psychology is offering a fresh perspective and serving to shift the negative-based mindset to a more positive-based mindset that focuses attention on positive symptoms and "building what is right" (Seligman, 2002, p. 4).

Over the last 10 years, the positive approach has become a rapidly growing field. Bestseller lists are lined with self-help books, the academic world is pursuing movements like Positive Organization Scholarship, and philosophies of organizational development such as Appreciative Inquiry are increasingly being used to gather data and intervene in a variety of settings. Is there value in this new, positive approach, and do humans have a lot to learn from the long-time neglected benefits of positive emotions? Barbara Fredrickson of the University of Michigan seems to think so. She has spent over a decade testing theories that support the positive impact that positive emotions have on lives (Fredrickson, 2003b). She explores both the cognitive and physical influence of positive emotions and tests the validity of not only real-time benefits, but also lasting effects (Fredrickson, 2001). Fredrickson, among others, is leading the way towards shifting a long-standing paradigm emphasizing research in negative and deficit-related studies into focusing on optimal human flourishing rooted in positivity. This positive-based research is uncovering the power of positive emotions. Beyond the pleasant subjective feel, positive emotions carry multiple, interrelated benefits (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Among these benefits are broadened cognition, enhanced creativity, increased productivity, and improved physical health.

Background

There seem to be a number of reasons why negative emotions have been at the forefront of psychology and, specifically, the recently flourishing field of "emotions." Leading these reasons is the idea that negative emotions are simply more recognizable than positive emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). The affect and facial expression for negative emotions are fairly specific and easily identified. For example, in a classroom at Circle of Children Preschool in Santa Monica, California, there are posters on the wall of animated feelings—characters called "onion heads." Each "onion head" wears an expression that the children are to identify. However, the negative emotions such as "fear" (with eyes and mouth wide open) and "anger" (with eyes and brows squinted and bottom lip curled in) are much more distinct in their expression than the positive affect of "happy" or "excited" (which are two very similar versions of a wide smile). The children are able to pinpoint the specific negative emotions more often and accurately than the positive emotions.

Negative emotions are easier to identify and more in number compared to positive emotions. Scientific taxonomies of basic emotions identify only one positive emotion for every three or four negative emotions, as noted by Ellsworth and Smith (cited in Fredrickson, 1998). There are also more negative emotions than positives emotions in the ratio of emotion words in the English language, according to Averil (cited in Fredrickson, 1998). This imbalance of focus has led to very little substantial information and research on positive emotions in comparison to their negative counterparts.

Another reason for this lop-sided attention is connected to "thought-action response repertoires" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 220). An action response is an action signaled by an emotion. For example, if a person experiences fear, he or she may have

the urge to flee or hide; if a person is angry, he or she may have an urge to attack, and so on. These "instincts" have been passed down through generation upon generation of human ancestors. They are wired in as biological responses. Since the dawn of humanity, humans have had to adapt, react, and survive. These action responses once kept people alive as they fled from a predator or fought to protect their young. Goleman echoed this sentiment in his bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence*: "For better or worse, our appraisal of every personal encounter and our responses to it are shaped not just by our rational judgments or our personal history, but also by our distant ancestral past" (2005, p. 13). Though these action responses have become somewhat watered down or "civilized" over time, they still serve to help and protect humans.

"Because negative phenomena capture more attention and appear to account for more variance in predicting psychological outcomes than 'good' phenomena, most research on human behavior has focused on negative or 'bad' phenomena" (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004, p. 3). The emphasis placed on the negative phenomena of emotions has been relevant, certainly, but what about positive emotions? What service do they provide? What value do they have? This reservoir of knowledge has only recently, by comparison, been tapped by the introduction of the field of positive psychology. Over the last two decades, new theories, research, interest, and empirical evidence have begun to shed light on the undeniable value of positive emotions.

Statement of Problem

The problem lies not in the fact that knowledge is sought and attained from a negative standpoint. It is natural to want to heal an injury per se. The problem lies in seeking and attaining only that knowledge.

Statement of Opportunity

The prefaced problem gives way for a tremendous opportunity: to seek and attain knowledge from a positive standpoint. The positive standpoint is an abundant resource that can offer insight into human flourishing that is both optimal and preventative. With this in mind, an informational workshop was developed to highlight the powerful effects of positivity and, specifically, positive emotions.

The educational intervention workshop for the staff at Circle of Children Preschool in Santa Monica, California, was intended to enhance awareness of emotions and impart knowledge, specifically concerning positive emotions and their implications in the workplace. The research sought to answer the question: Can this informational workshop induce a fresh perspective where the value of positive emotions are better understood and inspire a shift towards a more positive outlook in the workplace?

The following chapters of this thesis include a literature review that serves to explain and explore the link between positive emotions and a range of implications that can have a positive effect in the workplace, an overview of the methodology and workshop design, subsequent results and findings, as well as a final chapter that outlines learning points of this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the role of positive emotions in the workplace, covering such topics as enhanced creativity, increased productivity, improved physical health, pro-social mood contagion, and broadened cognition. To understand positive emotions and the relevance of this study, it is helpful to explore the comparison between negative emotion implications versus positive emotion implications. Research for this chapter begins and builds on this platform.

Defining Positive Emotions

"Emotions are, in essence, impulses to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us" (Goleman, 2005, p. 6). Emotions are subjective; they are particular to the individual feeling them and filtered through that individual's experiences. "Typically, an emotion process begins with a person's assessment of the personal meaning of some antecedent event" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 218). Emotions have long been lumped into one category without classification of negative or positive, and existing models serve to explore the form and function of emotions in general (Fredrickson, 1998). Though emotions are subjective, complex, and run a very wide gamut, there is consensus on what constitutes a specifically positive emotion. Fredrickson, a leader in the field of positive psychology, has identified a "top 10" list of positive emotions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Top 10 Positive Emotions

Joy	Gratitude	Contentment	Interest	Hope
Pride	Amusement	Inspiration	Awe	Love

Note: Compiled from *Positivity; Groundbreaking Research Reveals How to Embrace the Hidden Strength of Positive Emotions, Overcome Negativity, and Thrive* by B. L. Fredrickson, 1999, New York: Random House.

A recent article in the *Huffington Post* echoed an almost identical list, substituting only contentment with serenity (Henley, 2009).

Positive Emotions—What Do They Look Like?

Unless one is going around asking people if they are joyful or content, how does one know an individual is experiencing a positive emotion? Affect, behavior, and bodily response are all physical indicators by which a person's emotions can be gauged. It is important to note, however, that context contributes greatly to these physical indicators (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). For example, leaning into a person on a date while staring into their eyes indicates an entirely different emotion being felt than that of someone holding eye contact and leaning into another person while having a heated confrontation. Affect is simply a type of physiological response to an emotion. It encompasses, but is not limited to, facial expressions. It can extend to body language like posture or body positioning as well (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005).

A person's behavior can also act as a clue to identify their emotional state. A behavior is less subtle than affect. It is an observable action. For instance, if someone was conducting a job interview and the interviewee was tapping his foot, it could be deduced that the interviewee was nervous or if a person is whistling a tune, it might be

reasoned that the person is happy. People associate many behaviors with moods and often pair certain behaviors with particular emotions.

Bodily responses are yet another indicator of emotion. When humans feel an emotion, it evokes a response of some sort. All emotions are, in essence, impulses to act. The very root of the word emotion is *motere*, the Latin verb "to move" (Goleman, 2005, p. 6). Over the course of human evolution, human's bodies have adapted to their needs and circumstances. Some of these bodily responses to emotion are not visible and therefore not obvious indicators of emotion. Though not visible to the naked eye, blood flow increases to the hands when people experience anger, making it easier to use a weapon to strike at a foe (Goleman, 2005). Many bodily responses, however, are observable and aid in identifying the emotional state of an individual. As previously explored in the introduction, the action responses connected to negative emotions are more overt than those connected to positive emotions. Fear induces the body to send blood to large skeletal muscles, making it easier to flee and often produces what humans recognize as goose bumps. Love, on the other hand, though an extremely powerful emotion, generates a state of calm intended to facilitate cooperation and produces a subtle outward display of general relaxation (Fredrickson, 1998).

It certainly seems apparent that affect, behavior, bodily responses, and the overall field of psychology generate more obvious examples of negative emotions and people's connections to them, but that is not to diminish the powerful effects of positive emotions in our lives. The remainder of this chapter identifies and highlights these powerful effects, focusing on the benefits of positive emotions.

What Good Are Positive Emotions?

Emotions are not just feelings, but motivations to act. These motivations to act are called specific action tendencies and are connected to specific emotions, as with disgust connected to the urge to expel (Fredrickson, 2001). Why do certain emotions induce particular action tendencies? Again, these responses are rooted in human ancestors' ability to get out of life-or-death situations. Negative emotions such as fear and anger served to protect humans by narrowing their thought process to a specific set of behavioral options (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). This mental focus, along with the bodily responses, allowed for the evolution of the human species.

Though specific action tendencies are related to positive emotions as well, they are, again, much more vague in comparison. "For instance, joy is linked with aimless activation, interest with attending and contentment with inactivity" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 219). These examples are decidedly less obvious than the appearance of negative emotion action tendencies such as fear with fleeing, though nonetheless useful. Fredrickson, among other researchers, suggests that the implications of positive emotions, though arguably more subtle in their outward displays, are no less powerful in their contribution to human flourishing. Fredrickson explores the broadening and building capabilities of positive emotions.

Broadening with Positive Emotions

Fredrickson has developed the Broaden and Build Theory as a means of better understanding positive emotions and their unique effects. Positive emotions seldom occur in life-threatening situations; rather, they are experienced when people feel safe and satiated (Fredrickson, 1998). Instead of narrowing thought-action responses the way negative emotions do, positive emotions broaden them.

> Positive emotions broaden people's thought-action repertoires, widening the array of the thoughts and actions that come to mind. Joy, for instance, creates the urge to play, push time limits, and be creative, urges evident not only in social and physical behavior, but also in intellectual and artistic behavior. Interest, a phenomenologically distinct positive emotion, creates the urge to explore, take in new information and experiences, and expand the self in the process. In general terms, then, positive emotions appear to "enlarge" the cognitive context. (Fredrickson, 2003b, p. 332)

Along with this cognitive broadening, positive emotions also serve to undo the harmful physical effects of negative emotions. Negative emotions produce increases in heart rate, vasoconstriction, and blood pressure by arousing the autonomic nervous system, whereas positive emotions can quell these effects and return cardiovascular activation to baseline levels (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). As explored, broadening effects can span both cognitive and physical benefits, but there is more. There are also the building effects to consider and explore.

Building with Positive Emotions

Past the "broadening" aspects of the Broaden and Build Theory are its "building" aspects. Fredrickson (2001) argued that much of this "building" comes from the growth of personal resources. The idea is that positive emotions attract other people in a myriad of ways that can act in service to that individual. For example, it has been theorized that positive affect activates the dopaminergic system in the brain, which is responsible for executive control and flexible thinking (Fredrickson & Waugh, 2006). Isen connected flexible thinking to flexible perspective taking, which results in increased closeness (discussed in Fredrickson, 2003a). Fredrickson and Waugh (2006) proposed that when people feel positive emotions, over time, these positive emotions become associated with greater feelings of self-other overlap and "oneness," and this broadened sense of self may predict a more complex understanding of others. Fredrickson and Waugh described this

growth in personal resources as helpful, not only in one's daily life; they also highlighted the benefits of enduring social resources that help contribute to a thriving future. The broadening and building capabilities explored here not only have the potential to serve an individual, but also they have the potential to affect a larger, macro system.

The broadening and building capabilities give great cause for cultivating more positive emotions in organizations. The Broaden and Build Theory has been linked to increased capacity for coping skills and resilience. Studies suggest that positive emotions had, over time, contributed to more effective and socially integrated employees (Fredrickson, 2003a). It seems that positive emotions may contribute to optimal organizational functioning.

Positive Emotions: A Generative Capability for Organizations

Positive emotions have the potential to contribute to human flourishing and serve as a generative capability for organizations. "Individuals who regularly experience positive emotions will not be stagnant. Instead they grow toward optimal functioning through dynamic processes fueled by positive emotions" (Fredrickson, 2003a, pp. 170-171). As noted in Fredrickson (2003a), research by Staw, Sutton, and Pellod in 1994 showed that employee upward spirals in the workplace were associated with positive emotions. In one of their studies of 272 employees, positive emotions predicted improvements in various job outcomes such as supervisor evaluations, pay, and social support from both supervisors and coworkers. Research by Staw and colleagues described how positive emotions, through psychological broadening, can transform individuals into more creative, effective, socially integrated, and perhaps better paid workers in organizations.

The concept of virtuousness, defined in connection to human flourishing, has been linked to organizational performance:

> At the aggregate level, virtuousness has been associated with organizations, communities, and cultures. According to economist Adam Smith (1790/1976) and sociologist George Simmel (1950), it is the basis upon which all societies and economies flourish because virtuousness is synonymous with the internalization of moral rules that produce social harmony (Baumeister & Exline, 1999). (Cameron et al., 2004, p. 2)

The concept of individual flourishing as a generative capability for organizations, described here, is further explored through both pro-social implications and health implications.

Pro-social Implications

The workplace has the potential to be a great environment for feeling positive emotions because there is often the need and opportunity for social interactions. Many positive emotions are rooted in social interactions and are often the context in which people feel good (Fredrickson, 2003b). Studies have demonstrated that positive emotions are important to social activity as both a cause and a result of social interactions (Fredrickson & Waugh, 2006).

Positive emotions have the potential to extend to the larger organization due to their contagious nature. If one department or team is experiencing positive emotions, it is possible for those emotions to begin to affect the organization at large. Experimental studies have shown that one person's expression of positive emotion, through the process of mimicry and facial feedback, can produce experiences of positive emotion in those with whom the person interacts (Barsade, 2002), inducing a sort of pro-social mood contagion.

Contagion represents one way in which positivity is transferred from an individual to the organization at large, but it is also important to note another avenue for transaction of positivity: It works cyclically. For example, helping someone at work can produce a positive emotion like pride for the person helping, but it does not stop there. That single exchange can also produce a positive emotion like gratitude on the receiving end. Basically, positive emotions have the potential to breed more positive emotions.

Furthermore, positive emotions have been linked to charisma in leadership. Leaders who show outward displays of positive emotions rate higher in charisma levels than those who do not (Bono & Ilies, 2006). The same study found that leaders' positive emotional expressions were also linked to mood states of followers. It seems that this mood contagion, previously mentioned, is not only exchanged from peer to peer, but has broad influence from a leadership standpoint.

Positive emotions are not alone in their tendency to affect others. Negative emotions yield even more dramatic results. "One bad event or one piece of negative feedback, for example, is more powerful than one good event or one compliment in affecting relationships, emotions, and impressions of people" (Cameron et al., 2004, p. 3). This dichotomy is representative not of negative versus positive per se, but rather of the influence of emotions in general. It seems that the positive cycle of influence could be used to combat the negative cycle of influence, if so chosen. Positive emotions also have the potential to combat and/or prevent aspects of poor health.

Health and Physical Implications

Not only did positive emotions evolve as physiological adaptations that increased human ancestors' odds of survival and reproduction (Fredrickson, 1998), but they also can serve as contributors to improved health in the workplace. "For many organizations,

the struggle to compete has meant adopting practices that attempt to reduce cost and increase productivity—a 'do-more-with-less' mentality that favors profits over the welfare of people" (Turner et al., 2002, p. 716). In an environment such as this, occupational safety and health may be compromised (Turner et al., 2002). How can people be expected to meet an optimal expectation of low cost with high productivity if their physical well-being is suffering?

Studies have shown that frequent positive affect predicts physiological growth, lower levels of cortisol, reduced inflammatory responses to stress, reductions in subsequent-day physical pain, and reductions in stroke (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Positive emotional style has also been linked to a lowered susceptibility to the rhinovirus, also known as the common cold (Cohen, Doyle, Turner, Cuneyt, & Skoner, 2003). It seems that positive emotions have the potential to keep people healthy.

With all the beneficial implications connected to positive emotions, how is it that the evidence described in this chapter is not seen more often? Could it be that this fairly new trend of positive psychology, Appreciative Inquiry, and asset-based thinking has not reached everyone yet? Can educating along these lines make a difference, and how does one do it?

Educating on Positive Emotions

As research has shown, the unlocking of positive emotions can be a powerful tool for individuals and organizations alike, but it is not clear that individuals or organizations are aware of it. Furthermore, there is little literature on how to educate individuals and organizations on positive emotions.

The emergence of emotions as a field of study has, arguably, been undiscovered by many people, particularly if they received their formal education more than 15 or 20

years ago. Since then, colleges and universities around the country have begun to offer courses on emotions. The University of Michigan's Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship has become a resource for appreciative learning. Workshops on Appreciative Inquiry have been developed in the hopes that human systems will grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about. This shift towards emotional awareness, or emotional intelligence as it has been coined, seems a relevant topic for the general population.

The particular relevance for the workshop designed and evaluated in this study was connected to the heightened emotional climate at Circle of Children Preschool—a small organization with an almost exclusively female staff working in close proximity and constantly interacting not only with each other, but also with their "emotional products" (the young children in their classes). This particularly emotional work environment presented the need for a better understanding of emotions at play in the workplace and prompted the workshop designed herein.

Chapter Overview

This chapter served to define and identify positive emotions as well as outline their implications and broadening and building capabilities. These information points became the pillars of learning for the informational workshop described in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this thesis was to design and evaluate an educational intervention focusing on the role of positive emotions in the workplace. An informational workshop was delivered to the full staff of 18 teachers and 2 directors at Circle of Children Preschool and emphasized positive emotions and their implications in the workplace in an effort to enhance awareness of emotions and inspire increased levels of positive emotions.

Design

The research design for this study involved creating, implementing, and evaluating an educational workshop on positive emotions and their implications in the workplace. The intervention was evaluated using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures including pre- and post-measures of positive emotions and a comparative data analysis method.

The aim of this study was to collect descriptive data about the levels of positive emotions experienced by a sample set of teachers before their participation in the educational workshop and, again, after participating in the workshop. The comparative analysis of pre-workshop levels of positive emotions and post-workshop levels of positive emotions was designed to link possible change in levels of positive emotions to a new or refreshed knowledge of positive emotions and their implications in the workplace. Ten teachers volunteered to evaluate the impact of the half-day workshop by participating in a series of surveys and interviews. Responses to the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire, the PANAS Survey, and a brief interview were collected in two rounds for before-and-after comparative analysis.

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects reviewed the proposal for this research on September 10, 2010. After minor changes, the research project was approved as having met the requirements of the Full Board Review on October 4, 2010 (Appendix A).

Participants

There were no age, gender, racial, diagnostic, or ethnic preferences in the selection process of participants. Criteria for participation consisted, solely, of employment by Circle of Children Preschool and attendance at the half-day workshop. The volunteer sample set consisted of 10 teachers. Demographic information obtained included participants' age and gender. All 10 participants were women and ranged in age from 28 to 48. After Institutional Review Board approval, a recruitment letter explaining the purpose and procedures of the study was given to potential participants (Appendix B). A consent form restating the study's purpose and procedures, explaining participant confidentiality, and outlining possible risks and benefits was signed by each participant prior to any data collection or involvement in the educational workshop. A copy of the consent form is included in Appendix C.

Assessment Tools

All assessment tools, both quantitative and qualitative, were used in accordance with Institutional Review Board permission standards. Both the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire and the PANAS Survey are featured on the University of Michigan's Authentic Happiness Website. They, among others, are used to measure character strengths and aspects of happiness.

The Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire asked the participants to assign a percentage to the amount of time, in general, that they felt happy. The PANAS Survey asked

participants to scale to which degree, in the last two weeks, they felt 16 different emotions, both positive and negative. The 16 emotions ranged from *excited* to *irritable* and were scaled from *very slightly or not at all* to *extremely*. The interview questions, some based in Appreciative Inquiry, were centered on positive emotions, emotional awareness, and perceptions of work environment.

Workshop Design

The half-day workshop on positive emotions was designed and delivered by the researcher as part of a staff-development day at Circle of Children Preschool on October 20, 2010. The complete staff of teachers from Circle of Children's preschool and developmental kindergarten attended, as well as the school director. The design was inspired and informed by the literature review as well as the researcher's knowledge of the subject group and general curriculum design principles. Information on the workshop as well as permission letters are included in Appendix D.

The workshop consisted of the following agenda:

1. Interactive opening exercise

2. Overview of the research project

3. Introduction of workshop topic and relevance

4. Informational PowerPoint presentation

5. Review game

6. Team application activity

7. Closing discussion

The PowerPoint presentation portion of the workshop started by imparting information about the historically negative, problem-based approach to psychology and how often attention has been placed on the negative. The workshop explored how the

overt affect and physical indicators of negative emotions contributed to this lopsided emphasis. This background gave context for the disproportionate focus on negative emotion and highlighted the narrowing, limiting effects that negative emotions can have on lives.

The presentation went on to assert the need for an emphasis on positive emotions and informed the participants of the role that positive psychology has been playing in that shift. Positive emotions were identified, brainstormed, and discussed. Implications such as enhanced creativity, increased productivity, pro-social mood contagion, and improved physical health were outlined.

A brief media clip of Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory was shown to further support and explain the powerful effects positive emotions can have on lives.

After reviewing the information, workshop participants were divided into three teams to discuss what they thought would contribute to increased levels of positive emotions in the workplace and were instructed to create a playful presentation that represented that conversation. Open interpretation, creativity, and full access to school art supplies were encouraged. Each team presented to the large group. A discussion about presentation themes and a desired commitment to uphold a positive work environment served as closing for the workshop.

Data Analysis

Data from the 10-teacher sample set was collected in two phases, before and after the informational workshop. The first phase of evaluations was gathered in the two weeks prior to the informational workshop, and the second phase was gathered two weeks after the workshop. Methodology for both phases was nearly identical, with variance only in the qualitative interview questions. Quantitative methodology consisted

of the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire and the PANAS Survey, both of which were

completed before and after the workshop for comparative analysis. Overall participant

averages pre-workshop were tallied in Excel spreadsheets and compared with the overall

participant averages post-workshop.

In the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire, participants were asked, in general, how

happy or unhappy they usually feel. They used the 0-to-10 scale shown in Table 2 to

gauge their average happiness.

Table 2

Scale for Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire

10	Extremely happy (feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic)
9	Very happy (feeling really good, elated)
8	Pretty happy (spirits high, feeling good)
7	Mildly happy (feeling fairly good and somewhat cheerful)
6	Slightly happy (just a bit above neutral)
5	Neutral (not particularly happy or unhappy)
4	Slightly unhappy (just a little below neutral)
3	Mildly unhappy (just a little low)
2	Pretty unhappy (somewhat "blue," spirits down)
1	Very unhappy (depressed, spirits very low)
0	Extremely unhappy (utterly depressed, completely down)

Note. From Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire by M. W. Fordyce, n.d. Retrieved
December 10, 2010, from www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu

The second portion of the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire encouraged

participants to consider their emotions even further. They were asked to rate the amount

of time they felt happy, unhappy, and neutral. One hundred percentage points were to be distributed to appropriately estimate the amount of time, in general, they felt each of the mood states. Those percentages were averaged pre-workshop and, again, compared with the post-workshop averages.

In the PANAS Survey, data was gathered on specific emotions rather than the more general emotion data attained with the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire. The PANAS Survey asked participants to rate 16 different emotions, both positive and negative, according to the extent to which they felt those emotions in the last two weeks. The emotions that appeared on the survey are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Emotions List from PANAS Survey

Interested	Distressed	Excited	Upset	Strong	Guilty	Scared	Hostile
Enthusiastic	Proud	Irritable	Alert	Ashamed	Inspired	Nervous	Determined

* Positive emotions (highlighted) and negative emotions were analyzed separately.

Note. Compiled from information in "Development and Validation of Brief Measures of Positive and Negative Affect: The PANAS scales," by D. Watson, L. A. Clark, and A. Tellegen, 1988, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(6), pp. 1063-1070.

The rating options for the extent to which participants experienced these emotions in the last two weeks were

 1—Very slightly or not at all

 2—A little

 3—Moderately

 4—Quite a bit

 5—Extremely

The average among participants for each of the eight positive emotions pre-workshop was compared to the average among participants for those same eight positive emotions post-workshop. An identical process was followed for the negative emotions. Had those averages improved (positive emotions increased and/or negative emotions decreased) after attending the educational workshop on positive emotions?

The comparative analysis for the qualitative interview was a bit different. Though some of the interview questions were the same before and after the workshop, some were different and pertained specifically to the workshop. Both before-and-after responses were examined for changes in response, trends, and/or any relevant observations. The pre-workshop line of questioning consisted of the following questions and talking points:

1. Check in with yourself. How do you feel right now? Physically and emotionally?

2. Please describe what you consider a positive emotion to be. What does it look like? How does it feel?

3. Tell me about a time when someone else's mood affected your own.

4. How often do you make decisions when you are happy?

5. How often are you happy with the decisions you make?

6. Do you consider your work environment to be a positive place?

7. What would an ideal work environment be like for you?

8. Describe a person you know, whom you consider to be a positive person and tell me what you like most about them?

9. Do you consider yourself influential to others? If so, what is your influence?

10. Check in with yourself again. How do you feel right now? Physically and emotionally?

The post-workshop interview questions varied slightly in that they asked for direct feedback about the workshop and its impact. Some of the questions did, however, remain the same in an attempt to compare, for example, mood awareness before and after the informational workshop. The post-workshop interview questions and talking points were as follows:

1. Check in with yourself. How do you feel right now? Physically and emotionally?

2. Do you feel you have a better understanding of positive emotions and their implications since the workshop? Please explain.

3. How aware would you say you are of your own mood? The mood of others?

4. Do you consider your work environment to be a positive place?

5. What would your ideal work environment be like?

6. Has your attitude at work changed at all as a result of the workshop? If so, how?

7. Check in with yourself again. How do you feel right now? Physically and emotionally?

Audio recordings of qualitative data (interview responses) were reviewed twice for accuracy and coded for themes. Themes were crosschecked and validated by a classmate to ensure sound interpretation. Again, pre-workshop data was compared with post-workshop data and examined for changes, trends, and/or relevant observations.

In accordance with the participant agreement and privacy standards defined therein, participants' names were coded with numbers and all audio recordings were stored and listened to in a private, secure setting.

Each of the 10 participants took part in all quantitative and qualitative measures mentioned herein, both before and after the informational workshop for comparative analysis. Did the educational workshop on positive emotions enhance awareness of emotions and inspire increased levels of positive emotions? Did the workshop have the desired effect to contribute to a more positive work environment? Results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this thesis was to design and evaluate an educational intervention focusing on the role of positive emotions in the workplace. An informational workshop was delivered to the full staff of 18 teachers and 2 directors at Circle of Children Preschool and emphasized positive emotions and their implications in the workplace in an effort to enhance awareness of emotions and inspire increased levels of positive emotions.

Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire

Ten participants completed two rounds (pre- and post-workshop) of the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire. All participants completed the pre-workshop questionnaire two weeks prior to the educational workshop. All participants completed the post-workshop questionnaire two weeks after the educational workshop was delivered.

During the pre-workshop round, 6 out of 10 participants described their general happiness as "Pretty happy" (8), with two participants choosing "Very happy" (9) and two choosing "Mildly happy" (7). The average happiness score for this pre-workshop sample was 8, "Pretty happy."

During the post-workshop round, 8 out of 10 participants described their general happiness as "Pretty happy" (8), while just one participant chose "Mildly happy" (7) and one chose "Mildly unhappy" (3), making the average combined sample score 7.4, "Mildly happy."

Though the before-and-after means for the first portion of the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire dropped slightly from an even 8 to 7.4 ("Pretty happy" to "Mildly happy"),

the mode for both remained 8 ("Pretty happy") and, furthermore, increased in frequency from 6 to 8 comparatively.

The averages for the 10-teacher sample set before the workshop were Happy—70%, Unhappy—14.8%, and Neutral—15.2%. Post-workshop averages dropped to Happy—61.5%, Unhappy—14%, and Neutral—24.5%. Figure 1 shows a before-and-after comparison chart.
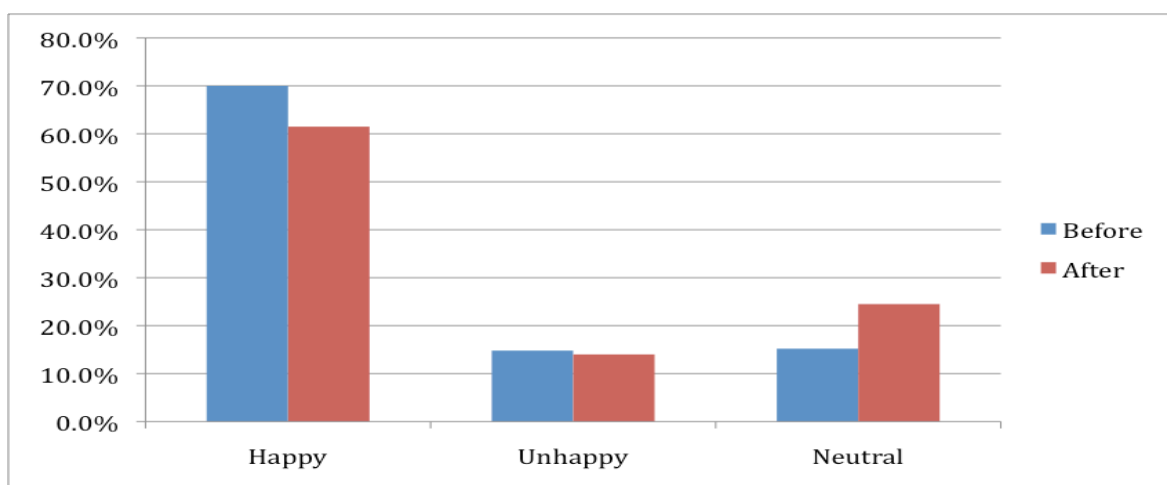

Figure 1

Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire Before-and-After Comparison Chart

PANAS Survey

In alignment with the intended comparative analysis, the PANAS Survey was also completed in two rounds (pre- and post-workshop). The first round of the PANAS Survey yielded the results shown in Table 4 for the positive emotions therein.

Table 4

PANAS Survey Pre-workshop Averages and Standard Deviations for Positive Emotions

Emotion	Interested	Excited	Strong	Enthusiastic	Proud	Alert	Inspired	Determined
Average	3.6	3	3.3	3.6	3.8	4.2	3.9	3.8
Standard Deviation	.699	.667	1.252	.699	.632	.792	.876	1.033

When the standard deviation was applied to each average, it highlighted the following ranges. For Interested, the majority of participants fell between the range of 2.9-4.3, for Excited 2.3-3.7, for Strong 2.1-4.6, for Enthusiastic 2.9-4.3, for Proud 3.2-4.4, for Alert 3.4-5.0, for Inspired 3.0-4.8, and for Determined 2.8-4.8.

The post-workshop round of the PANAS Survey varied slightly in its results, showing a slight decrease in levels of the most positive emotions (Table 5).

Table 5

PANAS Survey Post-workshop Averages and Standard Deviations for Positive Emotions

Emotion	Interested	Excited	Strong	Enthusiastic	Proud	Alert	Inspired	Determined
Average	3.5	3	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.6
Standard Deviation	.849	1.155	.699	1.031	.516	.951	.843	.966

Six of eight of the positive emotions listed in the PANAS Survey either showed a very slight decrease in the average rating by participants or stayed the same. However, all of those decreases were half a point or less in variance, which left them identified as the same in connection to the PANAS rating scale (that is, 3.2 and 3.4 would both be considered "Moderately"). Alert was the only positive emotion that decreased

substantially enough to change its rating—from an average of 4.2 ("Quite a bit") to 3.3

("Moderately").

The overall average rating of a positive emotion in the PANAS Survey reflected a

slight decrease from pre- to post-workshop results, with participants rating positive

emotions, on average, at 3.65 ("Moderately") before the workshop and at 3.38

("Moderately") after the workshop. The negative emotions listed in the PANAS Survey

revealed the data sets shown in Table 6 (pre-workshop) and Table 7 (post-workshop).

Table 6

PANAS Survey Pre-workshop Averages and Standard Deviations for Negative Emotions

Emotion	Distressed	Upset	Guilty	Scared	Hostile	Irritable	Ashamed	Nervous
Average	1.6	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.6	2.3	1.0	1.9
Standard Deviation	.516	.919	1.075	.971	.699	1.061	0	1.287

Table 7

PANAS Survey Post-workshop Averages and Standard Deviations for Negative Emotions

Emotion	Distressed	Upset	Guilty	Scared	Hostile	Irritable	Ashamed	Nervous
Average	2.4	2.3	1.4	1.3	1.6	2.3	1.0	1.6
Standard Deviation	1.174	1.059	.699	.671	.516	1.061	0	1.265

Two of the eight negative emotions listed in the PANAS Survey (Distressed and

Upset) increased, on average, from before the workshop to after. Three negative

emotions decreased (Guilty, Scared, and Nervous) and three stayed the same (Hostile,

Irritable, and Ashamed). Among those emotions that changed from before to after, only

the two emotions that increased (Distressed and Upset) did so enough to change their

PANAS ratings—from 1.6 and 1.8 ("Very slightly or not at all") to 2.4 and 2.3 ("A little"). These more substantial changes influenced an overall average rating increase for negative emotions from a before-workshop average of 1.65 to an after-workshop average of 1.73 comparatively.

Outliers were identified for data sets but, when taken out of consideration, canceled each other out and did not impact the overall averages. It should also be noted that individual trends were consistent with overall average trends, showing little to no increase in levels of positive emotions. Quantitative data suggests little to no increase in levels of positive emotions when comparing pre- and post-workshop results for both the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire and the PANAS Survey.

Interviews: Pre-workshop

The qualitative portion of this study consisted of face-to-face interviews with each of the 10 participants, both before and after the workshop. Participants responded to questions concerning, specifically, positive emotions; personal experiences related to emotions; perception of their work environment and the moods therein; and, during post-workshop interviews, effectiveness and/or implications of the workshop.

The pre-workshop interview consisted of 10 questions. Question 1 and Question 10 were the same: "How do you feel right now. Physically and emotionally"? This question not only gave insight into the participants' current mood and awareness of that mood, but also offered an opportunity to gauge whether speaking about and focusing a dialogue on positive emotions shifted that mood throughout the course of the interview.

Ninety percent of participants answered the same question differently when asked it at the opening of the interview than at the closing. The answers differed in three ways: they were more descriptive about their moods (that is, participants may have answered

"I'm well" in the opening and "I feel happy and pensive" by the closing); they reflected an improved mood (that is, "Okay. Pretty good" in the opening and "Wonderful. It feels good to talk about this stuff" by the closing); and/or there was a shift in mood (that is, "Tired. My back hurts" in the opening and "I feel a lot better! Not so tired" by the closing).

Question 2 stated "Please describe what you consider a positive emotion to be. What does it look like? How does it feel?" Participants gave a wide range of responses. Common descriptions were used, such as "happiness," "joy," "feeling good," "optimistic," "smiling," and "laughter," some of which were represented in the "Top 10 Positive Emotions" list (see Table 1 on page 7).

Question 3 stated "Tell me about a time when someone else's mood affected your own." One hundred percent of participants either gave a description of a negative mood that affected them negatively or stated that they were "affected more by negative moods than positive."

Question 4 asked "How often do you make decisions when you are happy?" And Question 5 followed by asking "How often are you happy with the decisions you make?" There seemed to be a direct connection between being happy when making a decision and being happy with the decisions made. Participants who claimed they were happy when they made most of their decisions also claimed they were happy with most of the decisions they made.

Question 6 asked "Do you consider your work environment to be a positive place?" One hundred percent of participants answered yes; however, 80% of those acknowledged room for improvement.

Question 7 asked "What would an ideal work environment be like for you?" In alignment with Question 6, 20% of participants said their work environment was ideal and 80% described an environment with more "positive feedback" and "consistency."

Question 8 stated "Describe a person you know, whom you consider to be a positive person, and tell me what you like most about them." Though participants described different loved ones and friends, the descriptions encompassed common qualities, such as optimistic, humorous, and connected to others (community).

Question 9 asked "Do you consider yourself influential to others? If so, what is your influence?" Ninety percent of participants did, in fact, consider themselves influential to others. Though participants described their influence in a myriad of ways, 100% described a positive form of influence (that is, "wisdom" or "creativity," not "gossip" or a "bad temper").

Interviews: Post-workshop

The post-workshop interview consisted of seven questions. Two of those questions were new (in that they did not resemble questions from the pre-workshop interview) and pertained directly to the workshop's effectiveness. Two other questions resembled questions from the prior interview and were connected to mood awareness. Three questions were identical to pre-workshop interview questions and were intended to directly compare before-and-after responses.

Like the pre-workshop interview, the first and last questions were the same: "How do you feel right now? Physically and emotionally?" Again, this way of opening and closing the interview was intended to highlight whether or not talking about the subject of positive emotions positively enhanced the participants' mood. As in the pre-workshop interview, the post-workshop results for this comparison supported the idea

that discussing the subject matter did, in fact, contribute to improved mood states of participants. Fifty percent of participants in the post-workshop interviews acknowledged a change in their mood from the beginning of the interview to the end of the interview. Of that 50%, 100% of them described either an enhancement in mood such as feeling "more relaxed and introspective" or described, specifically, that they felt "better." The other 50% of participants who felt "good" at the beginning of the interview described that they "still felt good" or that they felt "the same" at the end of the interview.

Question 2 asked "Do you feel you have a better understanding of positive emotions and their implications since the workshop? Please explain." One hundred percent of participants answered "yes" to this question, lending overwhelming support that information was, in fact, imparted as a result of the workshop. Participants went on to explain that the workshop served as a "great reminder of how important and powerful our moods are."

Question 3 asked "How aware would you say you are of your own mood? The mood of others?" All participants considered themselves aware of both their mood and the mood of others. Responses varied from "pretty aware," "very aware," and "extremely aware."

Question 4 asked "Do you consider your work environment to be a positive place?" The answers from the pre- and post-workshop interviews were consistent. All participants considered their work environment to be a positive place but acknowledged room for improvement. Suggestions for this improvement are highlighted in Question 5.

Question 5 asked "What would your ideal work environment be like?" This feed-forward question was intended to provoke vision and ideas around what participants would like to see improved in their work environment. The responses reiterated the

views of participants from Question 7 of the pre-workshop interview. Among the responses, "positive reinforcement" and "leadership consistency" were consistently requested.

Question 6 asked "Has your attitude at work changed at all as a result of the workshop? If so, how?" Nine out of 10 participants said, "yes," their attitude at work changed as a result of the workshop. One hundred percent of those that said "yes" connected that change to a "heightened awareness" of their emotions at play in the workplace.

This "heightened awareness" may be the link between the contrast of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative survey results showed a slight drop in levels of positive emotions after the workshop, while the qualitative interview results suggested a positive impact made by the workshop. How do these results coexist? Could it be that the workshop informed participants and enhanced the awareness of positive emotions, as it intended, but with that there was more thought and consideration as to what constituted a positive emotion? Perhaps the bar was raised, so to speak. Other possible conclusions and further learning are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to design and evaluate an educational intervention focusing on the role of positive emotions in the workplace. An informational workshop was delivered to the full staff of 18 teachers and 2 directors at Circle of Children Preschool and emphasized positive emotions and their implications in the workplace in an effort to enhance awareness of emotions and inspire increased levels of positive emotions. Did this informational workshop induce a fresh perspective where the value of positive emotions are better understood and inspire a shift towards a more positive outlook in the workplace?

Findings and Discussion

The findings for this thesis were varied. The before-and-after comparison of survey results showed an overall slight decrease in levels of positive emotions, whereas the interview data explicitly suggested a positive impact made by the informational workshop. Participants consistently described an enhanced awareness of the implications of positive emotions as a result of the workshop.

The qualitative data collected suggested a link between educating on positive emotions and experiencing positive emotions. The qualitative data seemed to suggest that increased knowledge of positive emotions and their implications led to increased levels of felt and expressed positive emotions.

Implications for Organization Development

As explored in chapter 2, there is a strong link between positive emotions and individual flourishing as well as organizational flourishing. The upward spirals that

positive emotions have the potential to produce can be a great asset and a generative capability for organizations.

Keeping employees in a positive frame of mind may seem like an obvious goal, but it can be challenging to achieve and exceedingly more challenging to sustain. A workshop may yield temporary results in improved morale, but the changes do not necessarily stick. Emotion states have a tremendous amount of variables feeding into them. Dealing with the complexity of those variables can be daunting.

If we, as organization development practitioners, are to contend with that complexity, we must engage in work that demystifies the often-complicated topic of emotions. We must better understand emotions at play in our lives in order to reclaim some of their power. Understanding emotions and how they operate in our lives, often referred to as "emotional intelligence," can serve as a competitive advantage in the workplace. It is our work to uncover and continue to evolve that understanding.

Limitations and Variables

Emotions are complex and subjective in nature. It is challenging to fully capture all their nuances and motivating factors. To directly link a person's emotional state to one event proved difficult. The survey data gave clear results, certainly, but there was no way to connect those results specifically to the informational workshop.

The reality is that each of the 10 participants could have had a myriad of factors affecting their emotional state and, in turn, their responses to the survey. Now, there was certainly a trend. An overwhelming majority of the participants' level of positive emotions did, in fact, decrease after the workshop (as did certain negative emotions), but there was no explicit link to the workshop.

The interview data offered more descriptive insight into the complex emotional state of each participant. Their own words told a different story of the impact and effectiveness of the workshop. The interview data also sheds light on potential explanations for the decrease in levels of positive emotions.

Among the details mentioned in the interviews, there were pregnancy, back pain, marital strain, and family illness. Perhaps these were contributing factors to the decrease in levels of positive emotions. The timeline for evaluations occurred in the two weeks before the workshop and approximately two weeks after. That window of time allows for a lot of grey area: A pregnancy moves from month 4 to month 5, back pain persists, or the news of a loved one's cancer arrives; life happens.

Perhaps emotional contagion was a factor. Due to the small staff and close proximity, it is possible that the mood state of several staff members could have affected the whole sample set. Another possible scenario is that the heightened awareness resulting from the workshop may have bumped participants out of a neutral state into a more contemplative state in which they considered their emotions more thoroughly.

Furthermore, within the work environment there were possible contributing factors. A teacher was fired in that interim and the school director returned to work after a 6-month hiatus from brain surgery, the same school director that participants had requested more positive reinforcement from. Participants mentioned both events in their interviews, and this too may have contributed to a drop in morale. It is hard to say what exactly got everyone down at the same time, but it is likely that it was a number of things.

A larger sample set could have uncovered more data and insight into the research question. Also, it would have been interesting to gather more information post-workshop to gauge the sustainability, or lack thereof, of the impact. Whatever the reason for the

decrease in the survey results, it remained clear from the post-interviews that the informational workshop had made a positive impact. People unanimously enjoyed it and felt the content was relevant.

Now What?

British novelist Arnold Bennett (n.d.) said "There can be no knowledge without emotion . . . To the cognition of the brain must be added the experience of the soul." This thesis is not intended to suggest that knowledge of emotions should or could trump the emotions themselves or that the knowing of the feeling is somehow more important than the feeling itself. On the contrary, emotions are powerful, relevant forces and should be honored as such.

The informational workshop on positive emotions was intended to contribute awareness of positive emotions' implications and, in turn, inspire increased levels of felt and expressed positive emotions. It was not, however, intended to mute, dismiss, or contort emotions to be used as leverage in the workplace. The aim was simply to gauge the power and influence of awareness.

It is my view that people want to feel positive emotions and want others to feel them as well. It is my view that life can be difficult and that consistently feeling positive emotions can be challenging. It was my finding that knowledge of the power and importance of positive emotions inspired people, even if, it could be argued, only temporarily. It is my hope that people can continue being reminded and that we may all find a balance between what we know and how we feel.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

October 4, 2010

Rebecca Kessler
1527 10th St #20
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Protocol #: O0910M04
Project Title: *Positive Emotions*

Dear Ms. Kessler:

Thank you for submitting the revisions requested by Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools IRB (GPS IRB) for your study, *Positive Emotions*. The IRB has reviewed your revisions and found them acceptable. You may proceed with your study. The IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46 - http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) states:

> (b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:
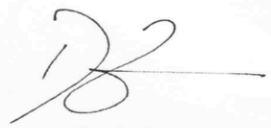
> **Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Doug Leigh, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Education
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
6100 Center Dr. 5th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045
dleigh@pepperdine.edu
 (310) 568-2389

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Associate Provost for Research & Assistant Dean of Research, Seaver College
       Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs
       Dr. Doug Leigh, Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
       Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
       Dr. Gary Mangiofico
       Dr. Terri Egan

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Circle of Children Preschool
1227 Montana Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90403

September 20, 2010

Dear Teachers,

As Michele informed us at the opening staff-meeting, I will be leading a half-day workshop on our October 20th staff-development day from 8:30am-11:30am. The informational workshop centers on positive emotions. I am looking forward to a fun and stimulating day!

This workshop is the cornerstone of the thesis methodology for my graduate program that you have all been exceedingly supportive of. I am sending this letter to ask for your continued support through participation in this workshop. I also ask for a voluntary sample set of teachers to take part in a pre- and post-workshop evaluation consisting of both surveys and face-to-face interviews. Content for all parts centers on emotions. Please contact me directly if you are interested in taking part and/or if you have any questions. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Becky Kessler

Appendix C

Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Purpose: This study is intended to gather information on emotions. Participants will be surveyed and interviewed - before an informational workshop on positive emotions and, again, after the workshop.

Confidentiality/Consent: I voluntarily agree to participate in this evaluation. I understand that this evaluation is being conducted by Rebecca Kessler, a student at Pepperdine University and will involve the following:

1. My attendance at an informational workshop on positive emotions (Oct. 20th)
2. My completion of the Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire and the PANAS Survey
3. My participation in two 15-minute interviews

I grant permission for the interview to be tape recorded and transcribed and to be used only by Rebecca Kessler for analysis of interview data. I grant permission for the evaluation data generated from the above methods to be published in the final thesis of Rebecca Kessler.

I understand that any identifiable information in regard to my name and/or agency name may be listed only in the above-mentioned evaluation report to the funder, that is, this information will not be listed in the dissertation or any future publication(s). I understand that my participation in this study poses minimum risk and that I reserve the right to refuse participation in this research at any time with no risk.

_____ _____
Participant Name   date

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date   date

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Terri Egan at tegan@pepperdine.edu , or by phone at: (949) 223-2564. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Dough Leigh, Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, at: (310) 568-2389.

Appendix D

Permission Letters and Workshop Materials

July 10th, 2010

Circle of Children Preschool
Michele Gathrid
1227 Montana Ave.
Santa Monica, CA 90403

Dear Michele,

Let me begin by thanking you for your overwhelming support of my participation in Pepperdine's MSOD program and specifically with my Thesis. As we previously discussed, I am intending to do my research project at Circle of Children. I formally request your permission to do so.

Though we have verbally gone over this, let me take the opportunity to outline my intentions for the research project:

I. I will survey and interview a voluntary sample set of teachers and faculty in an effort to gauge the levels of positive emotions in the workplace.
II. I will conduct, for the full staff of teachers, an educational intervention workshop on the value of positive emotions and their implications in the workplace. *To take place at Circle of Children Preschool on a predetermined date, as a staff-development-day exercise.
III. I will re-survey and interview the same sample set of teachers a week after the staff- development day for comparison of data. (I.e.: potential change in levels of positive emotions) At this time I will also survey the teachers on the effectiveness of the workshop.

All teacher surveys will be anonymous and accessed for data collection only by me.

I thank you in advance for your approval and look forward to your continued support and leadership over the remaining course of this journey.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Kessler

MSOD MuPrime Class

circle of
children
preschool

1227 Montana Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90403
310.393.7731**P**   310.393.4442**F**   circleofchildrenpreschool.com**W**
Michele Gathrid, Director

Rebecca Kessler
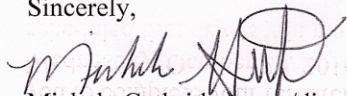1527 10th Street #20
Santa Monica, CA 90401

August 19, 2010

Dear Becky,

After reading your letter dated July 10, 2010 regarding Pepperdine's MSOD
program and your Thesis, you have my permission and I am excited to allow
you to complete your research at Circle of Children Preschool on
Wednesday, October 20, 2010. We have a Staff Development day
scheduled that day & you may plan & be responsible of conducting our day
between the hours of 8:30 and 11:30 am. I look forward to what you will be
bringing to our special day.

If you need any further information regarding our participation as a
school/staff please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michele Gathrid, owner/director

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children **naeyc**

Workshop Overview

8:30am- Opening Circle- Introduce each other

9:00am- Introduce workshop topic (positive emotions) and relevance

9:15am-Background/History of Emotions

    *Human action-response repertoires

    *Brain Function and processing emotions

    *Psychology to Positive Psychology

9:45am- Defining Positive Emotions

    *Identification/Listing

    *Affect

    *Contagion

10:15- Break

10:30- Interactive game (emotion/affect identification)

11:00- Barbara Fredrickson Media Clip

11:15- Questions and Closing

11:30- STOP time.

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Why is it good to feel good?

EMOTION

- Emotion is a complex psychological and physiological phenomenon involving an individual's state of mind and how it interacts between that individual and their environment (Emotion, 2010).

BACKGROUND
Why so negative?

- Psychology-Historically Negative
- Problems/ Symptoms based
- Negative Affect is more recognizable
- More negative emotion words in the English language
- More dramatic negative emotion action tendencies
- Negative vs. Positive

Enter Positive Psychology

- Strengths-building
- What's right vs. what's wrong?
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
- Positive Organization Scholarship (POS)

DEFINING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- What are they?
- What do they look like?
- What do they do for US?
- How do we feel more of them?

TOP 10 LIST

- Joy
- Gratitude
- Serenity/Contentment
- Interest
- Hope
- Pride
- Amusement
- Inspiration
- Awe
- Love

What do we get from Positive Emotions?

- enhanced creativity
- increased productivity
- improved physical health
- pro-social mood contagion
- broadened cognition

These are cyclical:
Positive emotions not only
signal flourishing, but produce it.

BROADEN AND BUILD theory of positive emotions

- Negative emotions serve to narrow your list of action responses

*Fear with fleeing (narrow)

- Whereas positive emotions broaden them

*Joy with the urge to play (broad)

Your options literally broaden!

BROADEN

- "Positive emotions broaden people's thought-action repertoires, widening the array of the thoughts and actions that come to mind. Joy, for instance, creates the urge to play, push time limits, and be creative, urges evident not only in social and physical behavior, but also in intellectual and artistic behavior. Interest, a phenomenologically distinct positive emotion, creates the urge to explore, take in new information and experiences, and expand the self in the process. In general terms, then, positive emotions appear to "enlarge" the cognitive context."

    (Fredrickson, 2003)

BUILD

· Growth of personal resources.

· It has been theorized that positive affect activates the dopaminergic system in the brain, which is responsible for executive control and flexible thinking.

·You begin thinking as "we" instead of as "me"

·Teamwork and cooperation are enhanced.

· Pro-social mood contagion

Sure, but what do we need to feel positive emotions?

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS
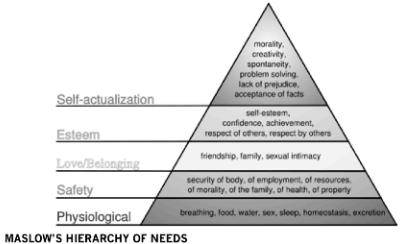
How can I feel more positive emotions?

- Emotional Intelligence
- Neuroplasticity- "learned optimism"
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
- Invest in yourself
- Physical Wellness
- Goal Setting
- Support Systems

This does NOT mean Pollyanna

- Don't be fake, be authentic.

- Don't dismiss an emotion, they are ALL relevant
- Do your best to move through it (resilience)
- Do your best not to put it on other people

What can WE (as a staff) do to saturate our environment with more positive emotions?

- What do we need?
- What do we want?
- What can we commit to?
- How can we support that commitment?