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From Paralyzed to Catalyzed: Supporting Adolescent Girls Through Positive Psychology Coaching

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This paper is written to identify strategic interventions, born from positive psychology research, which can aid youth coaches in achieving desired positive outcomes including increased optimism, strong social connections and healthy self confidence. Coaching is an ideal platform for the application of positive psychology. Adolescent coaching, an increasingly popular life coaching niche, provides teen girls with an opportunity to maximize their potential and improve their overall wellbeing through vision, action and accountability. This paper addresses the ways in which teen girl coaches can integrate positive psychology research and interventions into private and group coaching sessions, in order to affect lasting positive change on girls' self-esteem, friendships, and future orientation.

From Paralyzed to Catalyzed:

Supporting Adolescent Girls Through Positive Psychology Coaching

Jessica Rae Berger

University of Pennsylvania

A Capstone Project Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Andrew Soren

August 1, 2014

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Abstract

This paper is written to identify strategic interventions, born from positive psychology research, which can aid youth coaches in achieving desired positive outcomes including increased optimism, strong social connections and healthy self confidence. Coaching is an ideal platform for the application of positive psychology. Adolescent coaching, an increasingly popular life coaching niche, provides teen girls with an opportunity to maximize their potential and improve their overall wellbeing through vision, action and accountability. This paper addresses the ways in which teen girl coaches can integrate positive psychology research and interventions into private and group coaching sessions, in order to affect lasting positive change on girls' self-esteem, friendships, and future orientation.

Acknowledgements

From the first moment I saw Jen[1] I knew she was struggling. Curled up in a ball on the couch, hiding behind an oversized sweater, it seemed as though she was shrinking right before my eyes. When she finally spoke, her voice was timid and high pitched, ending each statement as though it were a question that she needed my permission to ask. Eventually, after some gentle conversation, Jen let her guard down and began to reveal the challenges that she had bravely, but unsuccessfully, been trying to cope with alone: perfectionism and fear of failure, poor body image and low self-esteem, strained relationships with girls and confusing relationships with boys, an overly involved mom and a severely disconnected dad… Her pain, frustration and embarrassment were palpable. She was clearly teetering on the edge of a dangerous cliff and desperately needed a hand to pull her back to steady ground.

I have been coaching Jen for over three years, and have watched her transform from a self-conscious, passive and distressed little girl into a confident, self-aware and determined young woman. Our coaching relationship, characterized by heartfelt compassion, steadfast support, concrete action plans and ongoing accountability was precisely the type of connection that had been missing in her life. Through honest and meaningful conversations, Jen and I were able to identify self-limiting beliefs, fears, obstacles and challenges that had been holding her back from realizing her full potential. Together, we developed hopeful visions for the future, established challenging goals and devised actionable strategies that facilitated ongoing growth and positive change in every area of her life from relationships to academic performance to self-esteem. As Jen's life continues to evolve, so too do the kinds of challenges she encounters. While life will

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[1] All client names have been changed for confidentiality purposes

never be devoid of roadblocks and speed bumps, coaching has equipped Jen to successfully navigate and cope with the turbulent tides of adolescence and beyond.

Jen's story is but one of many that captures the powerfully positive impact that coaching can have on teen girls. It is the purpose of this paper to unpack three distinct areas of life that appear to be particularly challenging for adolescent girls, and highlight the ways in which positive psychology can support girls in maximizing their wellbeing through coaching. Specifically, this paper will address the ways in which teen girl coaches can integrate positive psychology research and interventions into private and group coaching sessions, in order to affect lasting positive change on girls' self-esteem, friendships, and future orientation. While each of these topics presents complex and unique challenges, life is rarely compartmentalized. Throughout this paper, it will become increasingly evident that, although each subject presents distinct opportunities to explore specific positive psychology topics and/or interventions with clients, the three categories are inextricably linked. To that end, the skills and knowledge girls acquire through coaching in one life domain may prove to produce positive outcomes in other areas as well, resulting in a comprehensive approach to maximizing wellbeing. Furthermore, the three areas of focus represent a cumulative view of adolescent life, exploring the intrapersonal, interpersonal and global level challenges that teen girl coaches are likely to address.

Adolescent Development and Teen Girls Today

Adolescence is best known as the period of physical and psychological development between childhood and adulthood when individuals separate from parents, cultivate significant peer relationships and veer toward independent, goal-directed living

(Luciana, 2013). Historically, researchers have parsed adolescence into three developmental periods: early (typically ages 10-13), middle (ages 14-17) and late (ages 18- early twenties) (Smetana, Campione-barr, & Metzger, 2006)[2]. The psychological study of adolescent development has grown steadily in recent years, as the multitude of physical, physiological, cognitive and social transitions that characterize this period make adolescence an ideal stage of life to study (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Evidence indicates that adolescence can be difficult due to conflicts with parents and other authority figures, increased risk-taking behaviors and fluctuations in mood (Arnett, 1999). These hallmark adolescent challenges, in conjunction with a slew of others, suggest that a large portion of teens is vulnerable to emotional states and behaviors that produce significant negative consequences (Luciana, 2013). Furthermore, such patterns reinforce the common conceptualization of adolescence as a time of storm and stress (Hall, 1904).

Most recently, there has been a surge in interest and research on structural and functional changes in the adolescent brain. Technical advances in neuroimaging methods, specifically magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and functional MRI (fMRI), have transformed what is known about how the human brain develops and have facilitated an unprecedented expansion of this field of research (Blakemore, 2012). Evidence points to one particularly significant finding, indicating that changes in the prefrontal cortex and the limbic system continue well into the twenties, and appear to be related to both cognitive functioning and self-regulation (Keating, 2004; Spear, 2000). As parents, teachers, coaches and therapists seek to support teens in maximizing their wellbeing, this

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[2] For the purposes of this paper, the terms adolescent and teen will be used interchangeably

insight will be critical in re-designing and implementing strategies for buffering against the poor decision making skills and limited impulse control that are associated with many adolescent challenges.

Identity formation, a complex process of individuation and self-identification, is at the core of adolescent development and maturation. According to Erikson (1980), a prominent developmental psychologist who pinpointed critical psychosocial stages of development throughout the lifespan, adolescence is the stage during which past and partial personal identifications become integrated into one cohesive identity. In this way, individuals can easily maintain continuity between internal and external expressions of the self. Erikson (1968) further suggests that female identity formation develops on two dimensions: *intrapersonal* which involves tasks of separation and *interpersonal* which involves tasks of connectedness. The paradoxical nature of identity formation, with ever-increasing foci on *both* differentiation and inclusion, can often create social and emotional discord throughout adolescence, as attempting the two simultaneously may feel contradictory. For example, many females may mistakenly assume that in pursuit of autonomy, they must ignore their needs for connectedness (Lytle, Bakken, &Romig, 1997). However, according to McBride (1990), autonomy may be best understood as choosing to take care of oneself while also giving to others. This curious dichotomy is representative of many adolescent challenges, where natural instincts and reality-based solutions often pull teens in opposing directions, thereby increasing frustration, anxiety and turmoil.

From afar, it may appear that girls are thriving more than ever, as evidenced by promising developments in several domains including greater educational attainment,

increased extracurricular involvement, volunteer and pro-social activities, and a reduction

in risky behaviors (Girl Scouts of the USA, 2013). Despite this meaningful progress,

adolescent females continue to struggle significantly in their everyday lives with a wide

variety of challenges including academic pressure, bullying, family discord, peer

pressure, future direction and goal setting, poor body image and more (e.g. Thompson &

Barker, 2005; Wiseman, 2002; Simmons, 2009; Riera & Di Prisco, 2000; Pihper, 1994;

Erickson, 1963). One out of every four U.S. teen girls struggles with self-mutilation,

eating disorders, depression or perpetrating acts of physical violence (Hinshaw, 2009). As

if this fact is not alarming enough, the other three girls who are not battling clinical

diagnoses, wrestle with significant challenges that result in detrimental outcomes. Even

(and perhaps *especially*) girls who appear to have it all together on the outside continue to

struggle internally with hatred of their bodies, sexual confusion, relational aggression,

drugs and alcohol, fear of failure and an overall sense of simply not being good enough.

It is precisely this majority of girls (who do not fit the typical therapeutic client profile as

they do not meet the criteria for clinical diagnosis) who stand to benefit most

significantly from personal coaching that seeks to maximize potential and improve

overall wellbeing by implementing positive psychology research and interventions.

Positive Psychology as the Heart of Adolescent Coaching

Coaching is a dynamic process built on several basic assumptions: 1) clients have

an innate capacity for growth and development, 2) coaching sessions focus on mutually

agreed upon goals, 3) the agenda is often client generated and coach supported, and 4) the

understanding that the relationship between coach and coachee is primarily equal and

collaborative (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998). Coaches are typically

trained in skills like active listening, powerful questioning, reframing, "championing"

(acknowledging, appreciating and celebrating) and accountability (Biswas-Diener, 2009).

Furthermore, coaches generally work with individuals and groups who do not have

clinically significant mental health issues or abnormal levels of distress (Grant, 2006).

Taken together, these elements result in a coaching relationship that is typically more

informal and conversational than that of psychotherapy. For the purposes of this paper,

coaching can be understood as

> a helping, collaborative and egalitarian rather than authoritarian
>
> relationship between coach and client; a focus on finding solutions in
>
> preference to analyzing problems; the assumption that clients are from a
>
> population without significant levels of psychopathology or emotional
>
> distress; an emphasis on collaborative goal-setting; and the recognition
>
> that although the coach needs expertise in facilitating learning through
>
> coaching, the coach does not necessarily need a high degree of personal
>
> experience in the client's chosen area of learning. (Grant, 2005, p. 2)

Life coaching for youth has become an increasingly popular niche within the

coaching industry (Sleeper-Triplett, 2010; Youth Coaching Academy, 2010). Although

research on life coaching for adolescents is limited, evidence suggests that youth who

participate in life coaching programs experience myriad benefits to their health, social

and emotional wellbeing, as well as their academic success (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt,

2007; Lindgren, 2011).

Coaching is an ideal pathway for maximizing adolescent wellbeing for a variety

of reasons. First, adolescents who are turned off by the stigma of traditional therapy are

increasingly attracted to coaching. Where "therapy as usual" often focuses on healing

dysfunction and suffering, coaching appears to be a more appealing option because it

focuses on leveraging strengths as opposed to diagnosing weaknesses.

Second, the coach can act as *objective* listener, supporter and accountability

buddy. Bickering, arguing, and disagreements over day-to-day issues are typical of

parent-adolescent relationships, resulting in emotional distance and resistance to guidance

(Collins & Laursen 2004; Holmbeck, 1996; Smetana, 1996). Coaches have an

opportunity to support youth in making smart, self-honoring choices while still holding

their feet to the fire with necessary accountability.

Third, coaches provide a safe space for adolescents to share their greatest hopes,

fears, joys and sorrows. While many parents believe to have an open, communicative

relationship with their teens, adolescents often harbor painful secrets that breed

embarrassment, shame and self-loathing. Coaching gives youth an opportunity to

cultivate trust with a caring, open-minded and educated adult who can offer effective,

custom-tailored support.

Lastly, the ongoing developmental nature of adolescence lends itself well to the

teaching of tangible tools and strategies that can aid teens in effectively coping with

future challenges. Furthermore, the ability to extend or "transfer" information from one

context to another is particularly relevant given that teens' lives are not

compartmentalized: clients can transfer what they've learned during coaching sessions to

the everyday settings of home, community and school (Stanford University, 2003). Teen

coaches can enhance transfer skills by asking general metacognitive questions like: "How

is this problem like others you have solved before?" (Gage & Berliner, 1998). Such

strategic coaching inquiry can support teens in broadening their thinking patterns and creating new mental connections between seemingly disparate situations. In this way, teens can learn to problem-solve efficiently, effectively and eventually, independently.

A recent and critical trend in the coaching profession has been an increased interest in and synthesis with psychology (Biswas-Diener, 2009). Among other prominent coaches, Grant (2003) has called for greater emphasis on research in order to produce evidence-based practices that can legitimize and substantiate the coaching profession. Positive psychology, a field named by Martin Seligman in 1998, is an umbrella term for the scientific study of what goes right in life and what makes life most worth living (Peterson, 2006). In distinguishing itself from mainstream psychology, positive psychology seeks to address positive topics (relationships, emotions, engagement, meaning, accomplishment), positive target audiences (as opposed to those who are mentally ill), positive methods (not limited to solely repairing what's broken) and human flourishing (the good life) (Pawelski, 2013a). To increase human flourishing, positive psychologists have set out to develop a comprehensive list of positive interventions that may be used by various types of people (therapists, coaches, organizations) in several settings (in groups, one-on-one sessions and individually).

In no way does positive psychology seek to replace the decades of research on human suffering and disorder, but rather aims to supplement and balance that knowledge base with empirical research on sustainable happiness, human strengths and increased wellbeing (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Simply put, the mission of positive psychology is to develop sound theories of optimal functioning and develop empirically valid methods for improving the lives of ordinary and extraordinary people (Kauffman,

2006). In this way, coaching is nicely positioned as a primary pathway for the direct application of positive psychology research to everyday challenges.

Parsing the field into three related topics, *positive subjective experiences* (happiness, pleasure, gratification and fulfillment), *positive individual traits* (character strengths, talents passions, values) and *positive institutions* (families, schools, businesses, communities and societies) begins to highlight the wide variety of topics and constructs that comprise the ever-evolving research landscape of positive psychology (Peterson, 2006). Popular research topics include but are not limited to hope theory (Marques, Lopez & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011; Synder et al., 1991), strengths of character (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Park & Peterson, 2009, Linkins, Niemiec, Gillham, & Mayerson, 2014, Biswas-Diener, 2010), resilience (Reivich & Shatté, 2002), positive relationships (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Hartup, 1995), meaning and purpose (Seligman, 2002), self-regulation (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006), mindfulness (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000), job crafting (Wrzesniewski, Berg & Dutton, 2010), goal setting (Locke, 1996), positive education (Linkins et al., 2014), leadership (Greenberg & Maymin, 2013; and more.

Positive psychology application may be self-directed or facilitated in a variety of settings including schools, businesses, camps, community groups and programs, etc. As previously mentioned, coaching sessions are a natural and ideal setting for the application of positive psychology research and interventions, given their common foci of leveraging strengths and maximizing potential through vision and action (Biswas-Diener, 2010; Kauffman, 2006). To that end, the remainder of this paper will highlight the ways in which coaches working with adolescent females can affect positive change on this increasingly troubled demographic by directly integrating positive psychology into

coaching sessions. Specifically, positive psychology theory, research and interventions can be instrumental in supporting girls who are struggling to navigate through three quintessential adolescent points of conflict: *self-esteem, friendships,* and *future orientation.*

Self-esteem

Lily was always looking for approval in all the wrong places. In seeking to fit in with the popular crowd, while also appearing cool and unique, Lily fell prey to a vicious cycle of negative attention-seeking behaviors and subsequent self-loathing that left her socially isolated and deeply unhappy. Although Lily's many strengths were obvious to me, including phenomenal creativity, excellent communication skills and an exceptional sense of humor, she was utterly blinded by her shortcomings and failures. Unable to grasp ahold of any positive, innate attributes, Lily's mood, productivity, motivation and self-worth quickly plummeted. In turn, her grades, relationships and outlook on the future suffered damaging consequences that left her feeling hopeless and alone.

Lily was an ideal coaching candidate: although she struggled to navigate the choppy waters of adolescence, and particularly wrestled with low self-esteem, she was ready and willing to experiment with tools and strategies designed to deepen her self-awareness around intrinsic strengths, bolster her ability to overcome destructive thinking habits and cultivate positive emotions. Today, Lily is able to confidently describe herself in terms of strengths and achievements rather than weaknesses and losses. She is able to frame failures and challenges as opportunities for learning and growth, and although she still struggles with academic performance and friendship challenges, she can productively strategize about solutions instead of hyper-focusing on the problems. By calling on

internal resources and giving Lily a framework for intentionally affecting positive

change, coaching has supported her in increasing self-confidence, establishing authentic

friendships and cultivating an optimistic outlook on her future.

Like Lily, many teen girls struggle with negative perceptions of the self that pose

a threat to healthy self-esteem. Self-esteem can be understood as the subjective

evaluation that persons make about themselves that expresses approval, disapproval and

judgment regarding self-worth (Demo & Savin-Williams, 1992; Rosenberg, 1965; Suls,

1989). Adolescence has long been documented as a period of disturbance in self-image

that includes decreased self-esteem, greater instability of self-image and increased self-

consciousness (Simmons & Rosenberg, 1973). Research has found that girls in particular

show greater disturbances in these areas than boys do throughout adolescent development

(Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Specifically, girls have a tendency to lose their "vitality, their

resilience, their immunity to depression, and their sense of themselves and their

character" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 2). Simmons (2008) explains that the "Ophelia

phenomenon," or the loss self-esteem among teen girls, is often understood as a loss of

voice. The societal pressure for girls to be "good" produces shame and self-loathing.

There is a set of conflicting expectations (be enthusiastic, but also quiet; be smart,

without definitive opinions; be popular, but not the center of attention) that sets girls up

to harshly judge themselves based on unrealistic criteria.

The extent to which one approves or disapproves of their self can have far-

reaching implications, as higher levels of self-esteem result in a host of positive outcomes

associated with multiple domains, including affect, cognition and behavior (Kling, Hyde,

Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Specifically, girls with higher self-esteem perform better in

school, (Weiss & Kipnes, 2006), exhibit better mental health and more positive overall

functioning (Rosenberg, 2003), and are less likely to suffer from internalizing problems

such as depression, negative body image, and disordered eating patterns (Brown et al.,

1998; Davison & McCabe, 2006; Lord, Eccles, & McCarthy, 1994; Michael & Eccles,

2003). Conversely, a robust relation between low self-esteem and externalizing problems

has been noted, resulting in detrimental outcomes like antisocial behavior, delinquency

and aggression (Fergusson & Horwood, 2002; Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach,

1989; Sprott & Doob, 2000).

Interestingly, social and relational factors appear to play a critical role in girls'

difficulties with self-esteem. The highly individualistic nature of American culture often

promotes competition with others, thus encouraging comparisons that lead to positive or

negative appraisals of self-worth (Jordan, 1994). In essence, girls often feel pressure to be

unique, special or better than their peers in order to attain self-esteem. Young-Eisendrath

(2008) describes this conflict of interests as the "self-esteem trap", where such pressure to

be "special" and "unique" does not lend itself to the development of supportive

friendships, nor does it translate into increased confidence and autonomy. In reality, the

self-esteem trap promotes "excessive self-consciousness, isolation and relentless self-

criticism" that destroys self-efficacy (one's beliefs about their ability to complete tasks

and achieve goals) and positive self-regard (Young-Eisendrath, 2008, p. 7).

This vicious cycle is further complicated by the fact that girls place a higher value

than boys do on being well liked by same sex peers. In fact, many girls prioritize being

well liked over being independent or competent (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). To that end,

Tolman, Impett, Tracy and Michael (2006) explain that feelings of inauthenticity within

relationships strongly contribute to low self-esteem among adolescent females. In this way, young women seeking connection in a culture that equates independence and autonomy with maturity are likely to experience stress and shame over their desire to relate (Jordan, 2005). This conflict becomes increasingly evident for girls beginning in early adolescence, making this a developmental period when a girl's self-esteem is vulnerable to significant damage (Gilligan, 1996; Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990; Jordan, 1994).

Struggles with self-esteem during adolescence are exacerbated by teens' propensity for narcissism. While a certain amount of self-focus is necessary for honoring personal values and aligning actions with desired goals, obsessive self-focus compounded by pressures to be exceptional, feelings of inferiority, excessive fear of being humiliated and crippling perfectionism often results in detrimental outcomes among teenage girls (Young-Esendrath, 2008). Such narcissism is particularly dangerous in that girls are often hyper-focused on their greatest weaknesses, mistakes and shortcomings. In my experience, girls who experience this heightened state of self-consciousness and insecurity struggle to marshal their resources (both internal and external) in order to overcome adversity and cultivate an optimistic outlook on the future.

In recent years, self-esteem has seemingly devolved into a trendy, self-help concept that is often linked to unsubstantiated interventions. Coaches like Anthony Robbins are notorious for expounding on the paralyzing power of self-limiting beliefs and a negative mindset. While Robbins is a masterful storyteller and claims to have a "PhD in results" (Burchard, 2001, p. 137), his lack of scientific support for suggested strategies designed to shift mental blocks does not bode well for the reliability and

validity of coaching. Fortunately, positive psychology research focusing on *resilience,*

character strengths and *positive emotions*, has revealed empirically valid interventions

that coaches can offer teen girl clients in hopes of bolstering self-esteem and improving

overall wellbeing.

Resilience

Simply put, resilience is the ability to come back strong, healthy or successful

after experiencing an adverse event. Research points to six core competencies that

effectively bolster one's ability to handle adversity: emotional awareness and regulation,

impulse control, optimism, flexible and accurate thinking, empathy and connection, and

self-efficacy (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick, & Sawyer, 2002). Twenty years

worth of research shows that the ability to navigate, over come and recover from

adversity is a key ingredient for happiness, success and satisfaction in life. Conversely,

lacking resilience results in major negative functioning because of limited insight,

rational thinking and courage (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). To the extent that optimistic

thinkers exhibit greater resilience, learning to analyze negative events accurately and

productively can positively effect one's ability to cope with adversity (Reivich & Shatté,

(2002).

Protective factors of resilience in youth can be internal *assets* like strong cognitive

and attentional skills, coping skills, self-efficacy and positive self-perceptions (Masten,

Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009) or external *resources* like parental support, adult

mentoring or community organizations that support positive youth development (Fergus

& Zimmerman, 2005). To be clear, resilience does not imply invulnerability to stress and

challenging circumstances, but rather a distinct ability to recover from difficult events (Garmezy, 1991).

The literature on adolescent resilience has historically had two foci: resilience as an outcome and resilience as a process. Olsson et al. (2002) explain that outcome focused research typically emphasizes the ability to maintain normal functionality upon exposure to an adversity, while process focused research seeks to reveal the mechanisms or processes that underpin successful adaptation in the face of a challenge. In this way, resilience is both a means and an end to hardiness and flexibility in times of strife. Psychosocial outcomes that researchers have considered representative of adolescent resilience include academic achievement, conduct, peer acceptance and friendship, normative mental health, and involvement in age appropriate activities (Masten et al., 2009).

Risk factors for healthy adolescent development and the cultivation of resilience exist on a continuum, with severe traumas at one end, and everyday adversities on the other. New research suggests that individuals can become resilient and thrive in the wake of even the most damaging of experiences. Post-traumatic growth, defined as "a positive psychological change experience as a result of the struggle with highly challenging circumstances," (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p. 1) points not only to a survivor's ability to overcome adversity, but to positively evolve because of it. Areas of change associated with post-traumatic growth include increased appreciation for life, more meaningful interpersonal relationships, increased sense of strength, changed priorities and enhanced spiritual life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Such growth tends to surprise people and,

although it is not usually a conscious goal, it is a promising sign that even girls who are

in crisis can grow from painful adolescent experiences.

Coaching on Resilience

Coaching does not typically focus on crisis management, nor does it generally

address significant psychological issues. That said, coaches can affect positive change on

teen girls clients by helping them to productively navigate the daily adversities that rattle

their confidence, diminish self-esteem and thwart effective coping practices. Common

female adolescent challenges around conflicts with friends, academic pressure, poor body

image, sexual confusion, family discord and a variety of other life domains often produce

stress, anxiety, overwhelm and apathy. In my experience, many girls have become

increasingly sensitive and unable to tolerate even the most manageable of setbacks.

Consider girls who fall apart after achieving a B+ on an exam, or girls who melt down

when they don't receive an invitation to a birthday party. There is a clear and distinct

resilience deficiency that makes teen girls particularly vulnerable to negative outcomes

associated with adverse experiences. To that end, coaches working with adolescent girls

can teach them tools like those below to help them cultivate and leverage resilience in

order to overcome obstacles, steer through everyday adversities and bounce back while

finding a way to move forward (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

ABC Model: Ellis' (1962) ABC model, in which A represents activating events, B

represents beliefs and C represents emotional and behavioral consequences, aims to build

resiliency by deepening self-awareness, identifying self-sabotaging thinking patterns and

highlighting connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviors, (Reivich & Shatté,

2002). The foundational notion is this: irrational or inaccurate thinking tends to muddy

one's ability to problem-solve efficiently and effectively. Emotions and behaviors are often assumed to be triggered by activating events, when in reality, it is the way one *interprets* those events that will determine the subsequent reaction. To that end, the ABC model supports individuals in detecting their thoughts in the midst of an adversity in order to better understand the impact of those beliefs (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Using a simple template (see Appendix A) coaches can support girls in mastering the ABC model in order to build resilience and improve self-esteem. Coaches can use the following prompt to engage clients in this process:

- **Adversity (A):** The first step is to identify an *activating event* or *adversity* that triggers you to have a negative emotional reaction. These triggers can be small or big. Over time, pay attention to what your various hot buttons have in common in order to anticipate future challenges.

  Example Adversity: My boyfriend broke up with me.

- **Beliefs (B):** The second step is to identify your beliefs about what caused the adversity and/or about the future implications. Put simply, these beliefs can be categorized into two groups: WHY beliefs and WHAT NEXT beliefs.

  - ➢ WHY beliefs, primarily causal in nature, sound like this: "Am I to blame or is someone else responsible?" (personal) "Does this always seem to happen, or is this a rare experience?" (permanent) and "Is everything affected by this adversity, or just one thing?" (pervasive) (Seligman, 1990).

    Example Why Belief: I ruin all of my relationships.

> ➢ WHAT NEXT beliefs, primarily associated with future implications, sound like this: "Is the future ruined?", "Will I ever be able to recover from this?" and "What is the negative fallout?" These beliefs mirror the pessimistic explanatory style described above
>
> *Example What Next Belief: I will never have another boyfriend as long as I live.*

Most often, beliefs crop up automatically without much intention. Similar to a ticker-tape that runs at the bottom of a TV screen, these thoughts tend to run on auto-pilot in our minds, often resulting in negative outcomes. The problem with these automatic beliefs (which are often unfounded or irrational) is that the accurate identification of causes is essential to pinpointing feasible solutions. The better you become at identifying and labeling inaccurate or irrational beliefs, the easier it will be cope to with adversity and engage your resilience.

- **Consequences (C):** The third step is to identify the emotional and/or behavioral consequences of your beliefs. Catastrophic or negative thoughts will likely result in unpleasant consequences. Resilient individuals are able to effectively regulate their reactions and ultimately respond to adversity appropriately. It is important to remember that the goal is not to eradicate bad moods altogether or persist at all costs. Rather, the goal is to react in such a way as to leverage your emotions and behaviors in order to be productive in resolving conflict instead of simply acting on poor impulses.

Example Consequence: Client experiences feelings of sadness, loss of self-worth and exhibits frequent crying spells.

Ideally, teen girl clients can begin to understand the way in which beliefs about or interpretations of everyday adversities impact their ability to cope with challenges. In order to better understand how beliefs affect consequences, researchers have identified a handful of universal "B-C connections." Coaches may offer clients an easy-to-digest chart (see appendix B) that explains these connections in order to help girls identify patterns in their thinking, emotions and behavior. Pattern detection is particularly valuable as it enables clients to anticipate, and eventually prevent, non-resilient or unproductive reactions (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

The ABC model is an effective tool that coaches can use to support girls in deepening their self-awareness in order to actively buffer against negative outcomes. By becoming more resilient in the face of a challenge, girls can affect positive change on their self-efficacy, self-esteem and overall wellbeing. Furthermore, this strategy fosters independence and expertise, as girls can easily practice the steps outside of coaching sessions. In this way, girls can continually build habits and cultivate effective coping mechanisms that contribute to the ongoing development of self-confidence and resilience.

Avoiding Thinking Traps: It can be helpful to understand "thinking traps" as an extension of the ABC model: when adversity strikes, thinking traps are easy to fall into and difficult to break out of. Although the heightened self-awareness that results from working through the ABC model is in and of itself a valuable takeaway for clients, it is perhaps most important that girls learn to *re-interpret* adversities in ways that lend themselves to effective, actionable solutions. To that end, coaches may support girls by

uncovering thinking traps and brainstorming alternative beliefs or interpretations about activating events that can be used to inspire growth and maximize wellbeing.

Beck (1967) identified seven thinking traps, or predictable mistakes individuals make in trying make to sense of their world during difficult times. Reivich and Shatté (2002) explain that these mistakes can compromise a client's resilience, inhibit her ability to handle stress and setbacks, cause her to miss critical information and can even make her particularly vulnerable to depression. The same authors have identified an additional trap, resulting in a comprehensive list of eight mental shortcuts people take in order to manage their sensory overload. This list includes *jumping to conclusions, tunnel vision, overgeneralizing, magnifying and minimizing, personalizing, externalizing* and *mind reading* (for full descriptions of each trap, see Appendix C).

Coaches seeking to support teen girl clients in increasing their resilience must offer tools that buffer against these eight traps and cultivate more flexible, accurate and thorough thinking (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Flexible refers to adapting and shifting thinking patterns, accurate points to the importance of fact-checking thoughts against reality, and thorough highlights the importance of exploring a variety of options and ideas when one feels stuck. To that end, coaches working with adolescent girls would be wise to educate their clients about the eight thinking traps and how they often result in poor judgment and irrational beliefs. As explained by the ABC model, such beliefs can result in consequences that erode resilience and diminish self-esteem.

Reivich and Shatté (2002) have coupled each of the eight thinking traps with a goal and critical question that can help adolescent girls to effectively manage their reactions and increase their resilience (see Appendix C). Coaches can begin the process

by asking girls to break down a challenging situation into its constitutive parts (A, B and

C). Once girls have identified their ticker-tape beliefs about the adversity, they can check

their thoughts against the list of thinking traps. If a thinking trap is identified, coaches

and clients can strategize about how to achieve the complementary goal and explore

answers to the relevant critical question. In order to illustrate the process, consider the

previous ABC example in which the teen girl client initially believed that she ruins all of

her relationships and will never have a boyfriend again. Together, the coach and client

may uncover the client's tendency to *overgeneralize*, or settle on global beliefs about her

general lack of worth or ability on the basis of a single situation (Reivich & Shatté,

2002). Referencing the chart of traps, goals and critical questions, the client can begin to

examine her behavior and identify any specific actions that explain the situation.

Consider the previous example:

> ➢ *Adversity: My boyfriend broke up with me.*
>
> ➢ *Beliefs: I ruin all of my relationships and I will never have a boyfriend*
>   *again.*
>
> ➢ *Consequence: Feelings of extreme sadness and crying spells.*
>
> ➢ *Thinking Trap: Overgeneralizing*
>
> ➢ *Goal: Look at behavior*
>
> ➢ *Critical Question: Is there a specific behavior that explains the situation?*

At this point, the coach and client can explore the goal and critical question together, in

order to re-interpret the course of events and develop appropriate, productive beliefs. For

example:

> ➢ *New Beliefs: I can see that my tendency to yell had a negative impact on our relationship. I can also see that my boyfriend's frequent dishonesty was often the root cause of my habitual yelling. It looks like we both played a part in the demise of our relationship. If I work on managing my anger more effectively, I will have a better chance of maintaining a relationship in the future.*
>
> ➢ *New Consequences: Client takes ownership over her actions, and practices taking five deep breaths before calmly speaking her mind in the heat of an adversity.*

With practice, girls can become proficient in identifying thinking traps and using the accompanying goals and critical questions in order to prevent the consequences that often result from irrational beliefs. By helping girls to identify destructive thinking patterns, and the ways in which such patterns can hinder them from effectively resolving conflicts, coaches can build their clients' internal resources and cultivate resilience.

Putting it in Perspective: Anxiety has long been understood as an evolutionary warning signal against threats and danger, which in small doses, can be valuable for assessing and preventing too much risk (Marks & Nesse, 1994). That said, research indicates that anxiety disorders are the most common condition among adolescents, claiming 31.9% of the teen population (Merikangas et al., 2010). In my experience, adolescent girls have a strong tendency to ruminate on and obsess about minor problems, leaving them tired, distracted and drained. For instance, a recent client named Stephanie was planning a home stay while attending an out of state athletic camp. Instead of viewing this trip as an opportunity to exercise her independence, improve her athletic

prowess and develop new social connections, Stephanie became fixated on a series of worst-case scenarios, consequently creating problems that did yet exist. Although nervousness and self-doubt are normal when entering unfamiliar territory, Stephanie's inability to harness and manage those feelings left her feeling overwhelmed and unable to see positive silver linings. This kind of catastrophizing is all too common among teen girls, and often results in serious damage to self-esteems and overall resilience.

Putting problems into perspective is a cognitive skill that is designed to help girls engage in more accurate thinking by addressing the potential implications of a given adversity. Coaches can use a quick five-step process to help girls analyze a situation that is spurring catastrophic beliefs and gain accurate insight into their predictions about the future.

Coaches can begin by drawing a box with a row across the top and five columns below or using a premade template (see Appendix D). Begin by writing down the adversity in the top row of the grid. For example, consider a client like Stephanie who is *afraid of leaving home*. Next, coaches can help the client brainstorm the answers to the prompts in each column:

1. ***What are your worst-case beliefs about this adversity?***

    Example: I will never be able to survive without my family.

    My host family will think I am pathetic.

    All of the girls on the team will think I am weak and won't want to be my friend.

    My athletic performance will suffer and I will blow my chances at a college scholarship.

I will never get into college and I will have to work at a fast food restaurant for the rest of my live.

2. How likely is it that these worst-case fears will occur?

Example: I will never be able to survive without my family. (10%)

My host family will think I am pathetic and will kick me out. (5%)

All of the girls on the team will think I am weak and will socially isolate me. (15%)

My athletic performance will suffer so much that I will blow my chances at a college scholarship (10%)

I will never get into college and I will have to work at a fast food restaurant for the rest of my live. (one in a million)

What are some best-case alternatives?

Example: I will love being independent so much that I won't want to come home!

My host family will love me so much that they will throw me a huge party before I leave and cry when I have to go home.

The girls on the team will be fighting for my attention and I will have so many invitations to hang out that I will have to turn some down.

Now that you can clearly see the list of best and worst-case implications, what are truly the most likely outcomes from the adversity?

Example: I will be socially uncomfortable at first.

I will have to make new friends.

I will need to come up with a plan for managing my homesickness.

I will have good days and bad days during training camp.

3. ***How can you problem-solve the most likely outcomes?***

Example: I will remind myself that I'm not the only new girl at camp, and that discomfort is ok and will not kill me.

I will step outside my comfort zone and initiate conversations by asking questions and actively listening.

I will call my parents when I am feeling lonely, and if I can't reach them I will call a sibling or a friend.

I will set realistic goals for myself and manage my expectations accordingly.

By giving girls the freedom to openly catastrophize and expunge all of their worst-case fears, this process creates space for new possibilities and clear-headed problem solving that produces resilience and builds self-confidence. By the end of this exercise, clients have a clear plan of action that can give them a sense of control over an adversity that previously seemed chaotic and overwhelming. Quickly, girls can begin to see that they possess the power to affect positive change on their circumstances by slowing down and teasing out a problem until it no longer produces anxiety, but rather inspires intentional action. Putting adversity into perspective is a skill that coaches can hone during sessions, allowing girls to access and leverage this effective coping mechanism whenever they encounter a challenge.

It is clear that resilience is a key ingredient to adolescent success and happiness. Perhaps most importantly, one's resilience level is not fixed, but can be intentionally

cultivated through strategic cognitive exercises that combat irrational, catastrophic and anxiety-producing thoughts. In turn, the ability to think accurately and problem-solve efficiently produces increased resilience. Finally, increases in resilience contribute to a realistic optimism that can support girls in overcoming future adversities, thus boosting self-efficacy and ultimately self-esteem (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

Character Strengths

Character strengths are defined as the "positive traits reflected in thoughts feelings and behaviors" (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004, p. 603). Said another way, character strengths act as pathways toward living the best life possible and displaying one of the following six virtues: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Positive psychology's effort to explore what is best about human beings and how individuals can use those traits to cultivate their best possible lives has resulted in the Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths and Virtues (CSV) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The classification consists of 24 character strengths that are ubiquitous across time, space and various life domains (see Appendix E). In keeping with the underlying theme of positive psychology, to be of good character is not simply to negate or eradicate bad character, but rather strengths of character must be assessed and explored in their own right in order to learn how to capitalize on their presence and maximize their positive impact.

Seligman & Peterson's (2004) rigorous process of identifying character strengths produced a lengthy list of criteria that must be met in order to qualify for inclusion. The authors concluded that the character strength:

- Is ubiquitous across time and cultures

- Contributes to individual happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment

- Is morally valued in its own right, independent of any concrete outcomes it may produce

- Does not diminish others or evoke jealousy, but rather uplifts and inspires admiration

- Has an appropriate opposite or "negative" antonym

- Is trait-like in that it varies between individuals but shows demonstrable generality and stability

- Can be successfully measured by researchers

- Is distinct of other character traits

- Is embodied by notable paragons

- Is exhibited occasionally by prodigies like young children

- May be absent selectively in certain individuals

- Is enabled by institutions that intentionally practice its cultivation through rituals or activities

Strengths can be tonic or phasic: tonic strengths can be displayed easily and consistently over a long period of time, whereas phasic strengths may increase or decrease in intensity depending on the demands of one's circusmtances. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Furthermore, *signature* strengths are understood as those strengths of character that a person owns ("this is the real me"), celebrates, and frequently exercises (Peterson, 2006). Signature strengths are often accompanied by a feeling of excitement during use, a rapid learning curve, invigoration and a strong intrinsic motivation (Peterson, 2006).

Character strengths are relevant to struggling adolescent girls in two primary ways. First, several character strengths consistently correlate to a variety of positive outcomes. For example, among youth, strengths like love, gratitude, hope and zest have been correlated with increased life satisfaction (Park & Peterson, 2009). Character strengths-based school interventions have led to improved social skills, increased engagement and higher levels of curiosity and love of learning (Linkins et al., 2014). Positive education programming that emphasizes character strengths assessment and interventions has led to improved student skills and greater student enjoyment, more engagement at school, as well as increased curiosity, love of learning and creativity (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). This emerging research presents a compelling case for engaging youth in strengths-based practices as they have routinely demonstrated beneficial outcomes related to achievement, engagement and overall wellbeing.

Second, character strengths may positively impact identity formation, a cornerstone of adolescent development. Personal experience reveals that many adolescent girls feel embarrassed, ashamed or insignificant when they do not embody stereotypical identities like "math genius" or "most popular." Such labels produce destructive rumination, unrealistic standards and a hyper-focus on shortcomings. Subsequently, self-esteem plummets, leaving girls feeling unworthy, socially isolated and like a failure. Character strengths can offer a new set of uplifting, positive and rewarding descriptors that girls can use as forms of meaningful identification. For example, research suggests that *non-cognitive skills* (i.e. character strengths) are at least as important as cognitive skills in predicting success across multiple domains (Heckman, 2001). Duckworth and

Seligman (2006) found self-control to be a more reliable predictor of academic

achievement than IQ. Furthermore, Peterson and Park (2009) concluded that five

character strengths predict a high grade point average: love, gratitude, hope, perspective

and perseverance. This kind of information can be monumentally reassuring to girls who

feel hopeless about their future success and self-conscious about their identity. By

broadening their vision and understanding of success, both in general and on a highly

personal level, character strengths can offer girls a sense of confidence and clarity about

who they are and what they bring to the table.

Coaching on Character Strengths

Coaching is largely founded on the idea that clients are "creative, resourceful and

whole" (Whitworth et al., 1998, p. 3) at the onset of the coaching relationship. To that

end, seasoned coaches already have a strengths-orientation that prioritizes clients'

internal resources, including skills, talents, abilities and other positive characteristics

(Biswas-Diener, 2010). Although most coaches are quite familiar with concepts and ideas

about leveraging personal strengths, the common adolescent girl is often uneducated in

this arena. Therefore, it is critical to begin the process of coaching on strengths by

building a strengths-based vocabulary. This task is a critical preliminary step in helping

girls to identify and capitalize on their innate strengths. Research indicates that we are

evolutionarily predisposed to be vigilant towards risks and obstacles, and because

problems often feel pressing they demand immediate attention (Biswas-Diener, 2010).

Furthermore, societal norms typically demand modesty, and discussing strengths openly

can appear egotistical and inappropriate. Lastly, it is a common belief that one's

weaknesses, rather than their strengths, offer the greatest opportunity for growth (Biswas-

Diener, 2010). Given these realities, a strengths-based vocabulary is often foreign to the average teenage girl.

Coaches can begin cultivating a strength-based vocabulary by offering clients a definition of strengths, discussing the twenty-four character strengths in detail, explaining the positive outcomes of identifying and exercising strengths, and pointing out strengths as they occur in real time. It is worth mentioning that matching a client's language can help fortify the coaching alliance by demonstrating attentiveness and reflection (Biswas-Diener, 2010). Coaches can capitalize on this by blending the client's language with a strengths-based vocabulary, pointing out meaningful connections and overlaps, and suggesting substitutions.

Once the strengths-based vocabulary has been established, strengths-focused tools and strategies can be incorporated into sessions with teen girl clients in order to promote positive identity formation, increased self-awareness and improved self-confidence. Coaches can support their teen girl clients in achieving these beneficial outcomes and positively affecting their self-esteem by integrating strengths-based exercises like the *VIA-Youth Survey, Strengths 360* and *Using Signature Strengths in a New Way.*

VIA-Youth Survey: Results from a formal, individualized strengths assessments can offer a springboard for discussion around a client's strengths. The VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth) is a face-valid questionnaire that measures the extent to which respondents champion items reflecting each of the twenty-four strengths of character (Peterson, 2006). The VIA-Youth survey is a ninety-six-item questionnaire intended for use among young people, ages ten to seventeen, and is currently available for $10 in five languages at www.VIACharacter.org (VIA Institute on Character, 2014).

Upon completion, clients will receive a twenty-page report detailing signature, middle and lesser character strengths, as well as tips and activities for maximum application.

Coaches may assign the survey to be done at home or may help a teen girl client to complete the survey during a coaching session. Next, the coach can facilitate a dialogue around the client's results, deepening her self-awareness around her strengths and the ways in which she exercises them to achieve positive outcomes. Specifically, coaches can use Niemic's (2009) Aware Explore Apply model as a concrete framework for such discussions:

- **Aware**: Deepen the client's self-awareness by reviewing and explaining their results from the VIA survey.

- **Explore**: Dig further into the strengths—signature strengths, the ranking, the areas of opportunity, etc., and identify the ways in which the most prominent strengths are already in use.

- **Apply**: Brainstorm ideas and strategize about how to integrate, cultivate and nurture various strengths. Seek opportunities to apply strengths to current goals, or develop new goals based on the results.

In addition, coaches may consider using the following prompts as potential conversation starters:

- *Which five strengths feel most "like you"?*

- *How do you use your signature strengths on a daily basis?*

- *Tell me about a time when you used one of your strengths to overcome an adversity.*

- *Who enables you to use your strengths?*

- *What hinders you from engaging your strengths?*

- *In what area of your life could you apply your strengths more regularly? How so?*

Such open-ended questions can support girls in making connections between their

successes and the use of personal strengths. Furthermore, by identifying their strengths,

teen girls can begin to own them, recognize when they are using them, look for new

opportunities to engage them and ultimately exercise them more regularly. Doing so can

result in the laundry list of aforementioned positive outcomes, including improved social

skills, increased engagement, as well as higher levels of curiosity and love of learning

(Linkins et al., 2014). Furthermore, by promoting the strengths that teen girls already

possess, coaches can support girls in creating a sense of self that is positive, authentic and

meaningful. In this way, identifying strengths can serve to fortify a teen girls' positive

self-image and increase self-esteem.

  Strengths 360: The Strengths 360 activity provides an opportunity for teen girl

clients to receive feedback on their strengths from five people who know them in

different contexts or situations (Linkins et al., 2014). This is particularly valuable, as

experience shows that adolescents tend to formulate inaccurate ideas about how others

view them. Teen girls' tendency to hyper-focus on personal shortcomings, compounded

by an inability to objectively witness their strengths and assets in action, can make it

difficult to accurately assess the ways in which they are perceived by peers, parents and

teachers alike.

  Coaches can begin by asking the client to identify five people with whom she is

comfortable asking for feedback about her strengths. Options include parents, teachers,

tutors, classmates, teammates, athletic coaches, siblings, etc. The client is then asked to

conduct short, structured interviews with each of her five chosen individuals. To begin,

the client explains the VIA classification and provides the interviewee with a list of the

twenty-four strengths and definitions. The interviewee is asked to identify at least three

VIA strengths they have witnessed the client exercise, and provide concrete examples for

each. After all of the interviews are completed, coaches can explore the feedback with

clients during a coaching session. This process reinforces the importance of using

multiple lenses and perspectives to identify and reflect on strengths (Linkins et al., 2014).

Furthermore, clients may be pleasantly surprised to learn the positive view others have of

them, and come to see that they possess strengths that they had not previously noticed. In

the event that clients are not comfortable conducting such interviews or asking for face-

to-face feedback, the same goal may be accomplished by emailing five people the same

details and instructions, and simply asking for an email response.

Using Signature Strength in a New Way: This intervention has been

systematically tested and shown to have long-term positive effects on happiness

(Seligman et al., 2005). According to Seligman (2002) using signature strengths every

day can produce authentic happiness and abundant gratification. The beauty of this

exercise is that it easy to implement and can be put into action immediately. Coaches can

begin by asking a client to choose a signature strength they would like to exercise in a

brand new way. Once the strength has been chosen, the coach and client can brainstorm

new outlets for said strength. For example:

- **Strength: Appreciation of Beauty**

  -Visit an unfamiliar art gallery or museum

-Once a day, stop and notice an instance of natural beauty (i.e. a sunset, a flower,

a bird singing)

- **Strength: Bravery**

-Speak up for an unpopular idea

-Report an instance of injustice to the appropriate authority

- **Strength: Gratitude**

-Keep a gratitude journal and write down 3 things you are thankful for everyday

-Write a letter of gratitude to someone you appreciate

There are infinite possibilities for using signature strengths in new ways, and the flexibility of this exercise lends itself well to the ever-evolving adolescent demographic[3]. As clients become comfortable with the assignment, they can begin to challenge themselves more and more, inspiring ongoing growth and increases in self-efficacy. Over time, the intentional enactment of strengths in new ways becomes inherently fulfilling and can create a current of excitement, discovery and invigoration (Peterson, 2006).

Coaches can make a positive impact on teen girl clients' self-esteem by identifying and cultivating personal character strengths. Strengths identification and engagement has produced myriad positive outcomes in multiple life domains including academic achievement, interpersonal relationships and studious engagement. Ultimately, girls can use strengths as the foundation for building self-confidence and a positive self-regard, thereby increasing self-esteem and maximizing wellbeing.

Positive Emotions

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[3] For a detailed list of ideas about how to use individual strengths in new ways, visit http://www.actionforhappiness.org/media/52486/340_ways_to_use_character_strengths.pdf (Rashid & Anjum, 2005).

The idea that emotions are associated with specific action tendencies has been a key component to many theorists' models of emotion (Fredrickson, 2004). To that end, negative emotions, like fear and anger, have been linked with urges to attack and escape, respectively. Given that the study of emotions has historically favored negative emotions and often neglected that of positive emotions, the action tendencies identified for positive emotions have largely been vague and lacking in specificity (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

In seeking to capture the unique effects of positive emotions more accurately, Fredrickson (2004) developed a model of positive emotions that contrasts traditional action tendency models. Whereas specific action tendencies can be understood as a psychological process that *narrows* one's momentary thought-action repertoire, positive emotions serve to *broaden* one's thought-action repertoire, thus widening the array of possibilities for subsequent thoughts and actions (Fredrickson, 2004). In addition, positive emotions like love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration and awe can build psychological strengths and good mental habits, improve social connections and physical health, and make individuals more receptive and creative (Fredrickson, 2009).

All of this information taken together has culminated in Fredrickson's (2009) broaden and build theory, which posits that positivity expands one's outlook and imagination to a wider range of possibilities while simultaneously building the psychological, social and physical resources that are necessary for overcoming everyday challenges. The expanded cognitive flexibility that is present during positive emotional states results in resource building that becomes useful in overcoming adversity. In this

way, the broaden and build theory produces an upward spiral effect, where positivity

directly contributes to human flourishing.

In considering the application of this research to coaching for adolescent girls,

there appear to be numerous aspects of life where strategic interventions can be used to

capitalize on the beneficial functionality of positive emotions. First, adolescents'

perspectives are often limited by the developmentally appropriate self-focus and

narcissism that is common during this developmental period. Whether teens are seeking

new solutions to old problems or simply in need of a reality check to put their challenges

into perspective, the broadening effect that results from experiencing positive emotions

can be truly invaluable. For instance, consider a teen girl client whose best friend has

been spreading rumors about her. While experiencing negative emotions like betrayal and

sadness, the client's ability to brainstorm productive solutions to the problem may be

narrowed to options like revenge or cutting off social ties altogether. Conversely, by

priming herself with positive emotions through intentional activities like meditation,

playing with her dog or listening to uplifting music, the client may be able to access a

wider variety of problem-solving strategies like consulting a trusted adult or having a

heartfelt, constructive conversation with her best friend. In this way, taking the time to

cultivate positive emotions can help girls to make self-honoring choices that are aligned

with their greatest potential.

Second, the building of personal resources by way of positive experiences can

constructively impact social connections and future orientation, two areas of life that

repeatedly cause stress, anxiety and overwhelm for many teenage girls. Positive

experiences can produce greater mindfulness, optimism, increased expressions of

gratitude and reduce stress-related hormones (Fredrickson, 2009). The cumulative effect

of these positive outcomes can inspire the discovery and building of new ties and ways of being that can lead to meaningful and fulfilling relationships. Positive emotions are contagious, and sharing one's joy can ignite joy in others—a process that can forge strong social connections (Fredrickson, 2009). In addition, increased optimism can lead to the hopeful creation of possible future selves and scenarios that inspire, uplift and motivate girls to maximize their potential.

Lastly, it appears that positive emotions can contribute to resilience—a key ingredient to sustainable happiness and healthy self-esteem. Fredrickson (2009) notes that there are two basic responses to adversity: fear and hope. Fear can morph into stress, hopeless, sadness and even worse, shame. Such despair actually smothers and snuffs out all forms of positive emotions. Conversely, hope acknowledges adversity but further kindles positive emotions by creating an upward spiral that empowers one to bounce back from tragedy. Fredrickson (2009, p. 102) aptly notes, "...resilience and positivity go hand in hand. Without positivity, there is no re-bound."

Despite the fact that positive emotional states are only momentary, the benefits continue to accrue in the form of traits, abilities and social bonds that endure into the future. For instance, studies show that generating positive emotions by finding positive meaning in daily experiences (best, worst and ordinary) can result in increased resilience (Fredrickson et al., 2004). Thus, positive emotions lend tremendous value to positive adolescent development and the maximization of overall wellbeing. Furthermore, because positive emotions create a ripple effect, where beneficial outcomes can materialize in multiple challenging life domains, girls have the potential to experience widespread growth and positive change.

Coaching on Positive Emotions

Pessimism (the feeling or belief that bad things will happen in the future) and negativity (expressions of criticism) have a tendency to run rampant among adolescent girls with low self-esteem (Simmons, 2009). Subsequently, girls' ability to forge strong social connections, adopt a hopeful perspective of the future and overcome adversity is significantly hindered. In order to combat this downward trajectory, coaches can support girls by offering clients tools and strategies that directly increase positive emotions and produce beneficial outcomes. Specifically, coaches can integrate practices like *savoring*, c*ounting blessings* and *meditation* into coaching sessions in order to cultivate positive emotions and support girls in maximizing their wellbeing.

Savoring: The act of savoring involves intentionally engaging in thoughts or behaviors that maximize the effects of positive events on one's emotions (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). Although savoring is typically associated with experiences like eating a delicious meal, research shows that, in a wide variety of scenarios, savoring can produce myriad positive outcomes including greater meaning and engagement, increased mindfulness and positive emotions, and a deeper sense of gratitude (Bryant 1989; Bryant 2003; Bryant & Veroff, 2007; Bryant, Smart, & King, 2005). Savoring is an ideal coaching intervention because it is highly adaptable and can be used in regards to the past (reminiscing), the present (savoring), and even the future (anticipating) (see Appendix F). Furthermore, specific positive emotional outcomes correlate to specific types of savoring (see Appendix G). For example, if one's attention is focused inward on a cognitive reflection, the resulting emotion is pride. Conversely, if one's attention is focused externally on an experiential absorption, the resulting emotion is awe (Bryant & Veroff, 2007).

Coaches can begin to support girls in cultivating increased positive emotions by educating clients about the power of savoring and explaining the three temporal forms. Once clients have a clear understanding of when and how savoring can facilitate positivity, coaches can offer teen girls the following reflection questions in order to stimulate deeper thinking about which type of savoring may be most beneficial:

- **Reminiscing** (reflecting on the past in order to re-ignite positive emotions)
  - ➢ *What is it like for you to look back on happy times?*
  - ➢ *Describe a positive event that has happened in the past in as much detail as possible. What kind of emotions did you experience?*
- **Savoring** (becoming mindful during an experience and prolonging the enjoyment)
  - ➢ *What are some ways you can slow down enough to enjoy an event while it's happening?*
  - ➢ *How can you begin to fully appreciate positive experiences?*
  - ➢ *Given that emotions are fleeting, how can you capture or prolong positive feelings?*
- **Anticipating** (looking forward to an upcoming positive event)
  - ➢ *What situations do you look forward to most and how do you capitalize on the resulting positive emotions?*
  - ➢ *Imagine a time when you've really looked forward to an event and had several good feelings as a result. What happens to those feelings if the actual event is just average or even negative?*

In addition, Bryant & Veroff (2006) have identified ten succinct strategies for cultivating the skill of savoring in order to increase positive emotion and maximize

wellbeing (see Appendix H). Coaches may share this list with clients and encourage girls

to take action on one or more of these strategies between coaching sessions.

Meditation: Mind-training practices like meditation have the potential to cultivate

new insights and outlooks that are thought to enhance one's emotional experience.

Accordingly, meditation has been a popular and fruitful topic of empirical research on

wellbeing (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). Two decades worth of

research indicates that meditation can help individuals to self-regulate stress, anxiety,

chronic pain and various illnesses (for a review, see Kabat-Zinn, 2003) and it has been

suggested that practicing meditation can even increase positive affect (Easterlin &

Cardeña, 1998).

Loving-kindness meditation (LKM) is a technique used to increase feelings of

warmth and caring for self and others (Salzberg, 1995). Fredrickson et al. (2008) explains

that during LKM, individuals intentionally cultivate the intention to experience positive

emotions during the meditation itself, as well as in their lives more generally. The

authors' research indicates that practicing LKM can lead to small, but gradual increases

in people's daily experience of a wide set of positive emotions, including love, joy,

gratitude, contentment, interest, amusement, awe, hope and pride. In addition, the

research indicates that such shifts in positive emotion have been linked to increases in a

variety of personal resources including self-acceptance, mindful-attention and positive

relations with others. These positive outcomes are ideal for girls who are struggling with

low self-esteem, as they may directly combat the insidious self-consciousness and

damaging relationships that often cause adolescent girls to suffer.

Perhaps most importantly, LKM appears to be one positive emotion induction that

produces ongoing benefits long after the meditation is over (Fredrickson et al., 2008).

Given that emotional states are fleeting, it is critical the coaches seek to arm girls with strategies that can produce long-term benefits. Furthermore, the hedonic treadmill (the idea that individuals quickly adapt to increases in happiness and positive events, ultimately returning to a fixed emotional set-point (Brickman & Campbell, 1971)) poses a serious threat to sustainable happiness. Fortunately, research indicates that a regular practice of LKM can outpace the hedonic treadmill (Fredrickson et al., 2008).

In order to combat the destructive outcomes of the negative and obsessive thinking patterns that often plague teenage girls, coaches can support clients by practicing basic LKM techniques during coaching sessions. Practicing LKM together at the beginning of a session can positively prime clients for a focused, productive session. Coaches can integrate and recommend resources (including books, podcasts, applications and websites) that can support teen girl clients in developing an ongoing practice that produces maximum benefit (see Appendix I). Although the provided list of resources is far from comprehensive, it offers an initial smattering of tools that can be used to establish a beginner level meditation practice. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that coaches should not feel limited to LKM; mediations that emphasize additional positive emotions like compassion, serenity or gratitude may also be valuable in affecting positive change.

Three Blessings: The counting blessings intervention recasts seemingly ordinary events into advantageous experiences (Fredrickson, 2009). Research shows that individuals who regularly draw their attention to aspects of their lives that make them feel blessed increase their positivity (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Furthermore, studies routinely indicate that those who count their blessings on a regular basis are happier and more content with life for up to six months of follow-up (Peterson, 2006). To that end, counting blessings is an ideal coaching intervention as it is easy to maintain and can

produce long-term positive benefits. It is worth mentioning that research shows that this activity may come to feel monotonous if done every day (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Therefore, in order to maximize positive emotions, coaches would be wise to recommend that clients choose a level of consistency that feels appropriate and can sustain increased positivity.

Counting blessings can be done any time, anywhere. In order to increase the likelihood of completion, coaches may recommend that clients keep a journal by their bed and count three blessings at night as part of their bedtime routine. This gives clients an opportunity to reflect on the day in a productive and meaningful way. Variations of this exercise are easy to implement and may offer just enough variety to keep adolescents engaged. For example, coaches may ask clients to identify three things that went well during the day, three moments when they were at their best, three moments they felt proud of themselves, or three people they feel grateful for. Some teen girl clients may try to complete this exercise quickly and without much mindful-attention. To combat this tendency and to maximize benefits, coaches may suggest that clients add a brief explanation as to *why* each item was so meaningful, as asking for an explanation can lead to deeper thinking and increased positive emotion (Peterson, 2006).

A positive self-concept is critical to the success and happiness of teen girls. As previously mentioned, high self-esteem is associated with a host of benefits including greater academic achievement, greater mental health and better overall functioning. Conversely, girls who suffer from low self-esteem are at great risk for a plethora of detrimental outcomes in the future, including poor mental and physical health, limited economic prospects and even criminal behavior (Trzesniewski et al., 2006). Coaches have an invaluable opportunity to support teen girl clients by sharing tangible strategies

for fostering resilience, identifying and leveraging character strengths, and cultivating positive emotions. Furthermore, by offering girls tools and techniques that they can use outside of sessions, coaches are engendering the independence, self-sufficiency and self-efficacy that produce lasting positive change.

Friendship

Cassidy wasn't always a loner, but after being kicked out of two friend groups inside of six months, she found herself socially isolated and emotionally drained. Although she used to enjoy mingling with friends during her lunch period, Cassidy began to eat lunch in the counselor's office so she wouldn't have to interact with the girls who had abruptly stopped speaking to her. Rumors had been swirling that Cassidy was talking badly about one of her best friends, calling her fat and a liar behind her back. In order to punish Cassidy for a crime she had not committed, the girls banned together and wrote her anonymous notes detailing all of her flaws and shortcomings. They claimed the notes were meant to help Cassidy understand why they had cut her out of their group. In reality, those notes were a vicious form of retaliation designed to knock Cassidy down, and damage her already delicate self-esteem. As a result, Cassidy refused to attend school and her grades quickly plummeted.

Sadly, this is an all too common story among my teen girl clients. Their friendships are increasingly complex and unstable, often resulting in serious conflicts that produce anxiety, self-doubt and loneliness. Successful friendship development and maintenance has been an increasingly popular topic in my coaching sessions, as girls are in desperate need of tools and strategies for cultivating supportive, meaningful social connections. Improved communication skills, a better understanding of high quality

friendships and increased self-awareness around social behaviors and attitudes can help

girls like Cassidy to develop and sustain long-lasting, healthy relationships.

Teen girl friendships present a curious conundrum: on one hand they seem to be

highly influential and meaningful, yet on the other they can appear shallow and fleeting

(Wilkinson, 2010). Despite this dichotomy, empirical evidence indicates that friendships,

in general, significantly impact the psychological health and adaptive functioning of

adolescents, as positive relationships with peers often improve psychological wellbeing

and buffer against psycho-social stressors (Berndt, Hawkins, & Jiao, 1999; Bukowski,

Hoza, & Boivin, 1993; Laursen, Furman, & Mooney, 2006; Wilkinson, 2004).

Throughout the friendship research, recurring features of lasting friendships include *trust*

(being consistently available, reliable and not betraying confidences), *acceptance* (not

rejecting the other based on imperfections), *intimacy* (involving risk-taking in sharing

information one fears other people knowing) and *reciprocation* (ideally an equal division

of giving and taking) (Button, 1979).

Over the course of the lifespan, friendships meet varying needs and facilitate the

development of a wide range of skills. For adolescent girls, friendship becomes the

means to many ends including self-awareness, self-invention, connectivity, empathy,

communication and conflict resolution skills, and much more (Siegel, 2013; Simmons,

2002). Positive outcomes from high quality friendships include increased self-esteem,

greater school achievement and fewer behavioral problems (Berndt & Keefe, 1995;

Hartup, 1995). Sullivan (1953) argues that friends provide context-specific experiences

that parents cannot offer; peers make a significant impact on adolescents' feelings of self-

worth and social competence. Perhaps most importantly, successful socialization serves

psychological and social wellbeing by cultivating feelings that the self is significant or

matters to others (Erikson, 1964; Rosenberg, 1985). At the group level, mattering

signifies communion or belonging—a core need for nearly all people, but most certainly

for adolescent girls (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

　　　　With increasingly easy access to various modes of communication, including cell

phones, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc., girls have more opportunities than ever to

connect, develop alliances and offer each other much needed companionship. Despite

this increased contact and the laundry list of positive outcomes associated with

adolescent female friendships, "girl drama" and friendship conflicts are consistently

frequent points of distress in coaching sessions with teen girls.

　　　　It turns out that girls' friendships also appear to be associated with several

significant negative emotions and vulnerabilities like jealousy and excessive rumination

(Lavallee & Parker, 2009). In a 2012 survey, ninety percent of students reported being

the target of bullying and relational aggression (RA): behavior that can "harm others

through damage (or the threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance,

friendship, or group inclusion" (The Ophelia Project, 2012; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995, p.

79). Research indicates that RA is related to increased depression, lower academic

performance, increased suicidal ideation, anxiety, anger, sadness, and other negative

consequences (The Ophelia Project, 2012). Disturbingly, girls are twice as likely as

boys to attempt suicide if they have few friends and are socially isolated from their

peers (Bearman & Moody, 2004).

　　　　Friendship challenges do not end with bullying and RA. Consider additional

obstacles like peer pressure, disloyalty, rumor spreading and gossiping, exclusivity and

cliques, competition for attention and affection, social hierarchies, lying, popularity contests, anonymous attacks on social media outlets, and so on. While this list begins to shed light on the multitude of friendship related problems girls face, it does not begin to capture the heartbreak, loneliness and shame that result from such experiences. It is a sad and difficult truth to accept that every adolescent female I have encountered—both within my coaching practice and in everyday life— has witnessed at least one, if not several of these all too common friendship nightmares.

In order to support girls in cultivating friendships that are meaningful, sincere and capable of producing the myriad positive outcomes outlined in the friendship research, coaches can use private and group sessions to explore topics associated with positive relationships and offer tangible strategies for navigating the choppy waters of adolescent friendships. Specifically, coaches can explore topics like *active constructive responding,* the benefits of *hive culture,* the power of *high quality connections,* and the value of being a *giver.* While basic education and simple discussion around such relevant topics can lay the groundwork for a new generation of adolescent female friendships, coaches would be wise to offer clients a concrete intervention that can be practiced and shared with other girls, thus creating a new current of ongoing positive change.

Active Constructive Responding

All behavior is communication at some level—gesture, body language, tone of voice, posture, language, etc.—and effective communication skills lie at the heart of successful interpersonal relationships (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008). As evidenced by the plethora of friendship battles girls fight on a daily basis, there is a great need for resources that teach girls how to resolve conflicts respectfully and efficiently. That said,

it appears that girls are equally in need of communication skills that express support,

acknowledgment and appreciation of one another's achievements and positive

experiences.

In my work with girls, it has become clear that excessive jealousy and

competition creates the kind of friction between girls that produces the sparks of future

friendship firestorms. Even among sisters, these patterns are undeniable. For example,

two of my clients (sisters) are students in the same biology class and members of the

same competitive rowing team. While both girls are extremely high achieving in both

school and extracurricular activities, they are stuck in a cycle of one-upping each other

and comparing themselves against the other in hopes of coming out on top. Subsequently,

the girls' competitive and jealous behavior has driven a wedge between them, resulting in

ongoing conflicts and emotional discord. Competition among girls is so fierce today, that

it has become a "silent battle" (Simmons, 2002, p. 118). The same goes for jealousy: it

"transforms friends into mere objects, as girls obsess over whatever part of them—body,

hair, boyfriend, skin—they want for themselves" (Simmons, 2002, p. 119). To that end, it

is imperative that coaches support girls in learning to celebrate each other's successes and

triumphs through sincere, positive communication.

Common sense indicates that when someone shares a difficult experience or talks

about a challenge they're facing, the way the listener responds can either support or

diminish the relationship. However, research indicates that it might be equally, if not

more important, to pay attention to the way in which the listener responds when others

share good news. For example, when a girl shares a positive experience with another girl,

also known as *capitalization* (Langston, 1994); feeling understood, validated and cared

for often results in relationship wellbeing and increased positive affect (Gable, Reis,

Impett, & Asher, 2004). These positive outcomes, however, are largely linked to the

reaction of the *listener*. Unfortunately, teenage girls often fail to acknowledge and praise

one another due to the fierce competition for popularity and status (Wiseman, 2002).

Response styles to positive event discussions can be differentiated into four

styles: *active-constructive* (enthusiastic support), *passive–constructive* (quiet, delayed or

understated support), *active–destructive* (demeaning or dismissing the event), and

passive–destructive responses (changing the subject, ignoring the event) (Gable, Gonzaga,

& Strachman, 2006). Only a*ctive constructive responding* (ACR) has been shown to

result in relationship benefits, including greater satisfaction, understanding, validation,

caring, trust, and fewer conflicts (Gable et al., 2004). Furthermore, because capitalization

also leads to increases in positive affect, greater life satisfaction and greater

belongingness, it is imperative that teen girls learn to use ACR as often as possible in

order to encourage more acts of capitalization, thereby maximizing wellbeing (Reivich,

2014).

Coaching on ACR

Coaches seeking to teach teen girls the benefits of ACR can use a two-pronged

approach. First, coaches can educate their clients about the four response styles and their

subsequent outcomes. Handouts with descriptions of the four response styles and simple

illustrations (see Appendix J) can maximize learning by giving the client a tangible

takeaway that she can reference at a later date—even without the presence of the coach.

In this way, the coach fosters autonomy and self-sufficiency while still sharing valuable

information.

Once the client is familiar with the concepts of capitalization and active constructive responding, coaches can intentionally model ACR for their clients by offering enthusiastic support when girls share achievements and successes during sessions. Bandura (1971) explains that individuals tend to repeat observed behaviors, and adolescents are particularly likely to be influenced by the adults most present in their lives (Erikson, 1968). To that end, research shows that the way parents responded to their kids' capitalization attempts predicted the way the kid responded to their best friend, which in turn predicted friendship quality (Tanner, 2009). In this way, coaches can act as models for their clients, and call attention to their use of ACR when appropriate.

Lastly, role-playing has long been a traditional tool in the helping professional's toolbox for two primary reasons. First, it gives the client an opportunity to gain mastery over difficult skills and practice in a low-risk environment. Second, by engaging in role reversal, the coach can get a sense of how the client interprets the world, is treated by others and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Levinson & Herman, 1991). By offering clients a chance to practice both capitalization and ACR, teen girl coaches can expand and improve their clients' communication skill set, thereby setting them to up reap positive rewards in their everyday friendships.

Hive Culture

Adolescent girls have a strong tendency to form small, exclusive cliques, thereby creating factions within a larger group and sowing the seeds for the cruel competition for popularity and status (Wiseman, 2002). Further complicating the matter, narcissism is a pervasive challenge among girls and leads to myriad negative outcomes including social isolation, poor listening skills, limited empathy, distrust and loneliness (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). Such "queen bee" narcissism produces additional divisions within

cliques, where girls are forced to choose between friends and new cliques are formed. While the snootiness of cliques often leads to frustration and nasty conflict, coaches can capitalize on this teenage instinct to ban together by educating girls about the benefits of *hive culture*, and suggesting strategies for shifting away from the exclusivity of cliques and towards a more inclusive way of relating.

Haidt (2012) suggests that humans are 90% chimp and 10% bee: chimps because of individuals' relentless propensity to compete against one another, and bees because of the "groupish" tendencies that inspire cooperation when whole groups go head to head. Subsequently, Haidt suggests that under certain conditions, humans can flip the "hive switch," rise above self-interest and temporarily prioritize the greater good. Haidt deepens the analogy by differentiating between packs and hives: while packs do require teamwork, there is constant competition for status and resources—not a far cry from the typical teen girl clique.

Haidt's hive hypothesis suggests that the most efficient, productive and happy groups operate like hives: they create a shared fate (where all group members are in the same boat), suppress free riders (refusing to tolerate those who gossip and act out), create a noble collective mission, and engage in synchronous rituals that help to cultivate harmony and cohesion, (J. Haidt, onsite lecture, November 17, 2013). Furthermore, cooperation and teamwork are critical hallmarks of hive culture, and indispensable features of an effective group. In this way, it is evident that the intentional cultivation of a hive culture among adolescent girls can lead to increased connection, compassion and cooperation.

Coaching on Hive Culture

In order to maximize impact and outreach, I suggest coaching girls on hive culture in a group setting. While discussing hive culture one-on-one can absolutely be valuable, it is important for groups of girls to share a common language and co-create group goals, as doing so typically engenders greater buy-in. In recent years, the demand for workshops on friendship has grown significantly within schools and girl organizations, as rates of relational aggression continue to rise. To that end, coaches can capitalize on this growing need by incorporating the following hive culture principles into group sessions in order to maximize group harmony and wellbeing.

Creating a shared fate: In order for girls to work towards a common goal, they must first partake in the act of envisioning the particulars of that goal. To facilitate this process, coaches can borrow from appreciative inquiry, a simple but powerful process designed to create positive systemic change by engaging all members of a group in a 4-D cycle of discovery, dreaming, design and destiny (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). Step 2 of the 4-D cycle, the "dream phase," encourages the development of possible futures by posing questions like "what might be?" and "what is better?" (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p. 101). Key activities for the girls may include "sharing of dreams, enlivening the dreams, enacting, imagining and defining the dreams" (p. 137). Cooperrider's "highpoint moment" exercise (D. Cooperrider, onsite lecture, January 11, 2014) is an easy way to get the discussion started. Asking the girls to discuss a peak time or experience with girlfriends can help them to connect to what is possible. After an extended period of relational aggression, it can be easy to forget how wonderful friendships with girls can be. This exercise can help girls to reconnect back to the positive aspects of their relationships with girls and dream big about the possibilities for the

future. Coaches can facilitate the process by asking open-ended questions that inspire

broad and deep thinking. For example:

Imagine a time in the future when your group of girls serves as a paragon for healthy girl

relationships.

- *In this future, how are girls engaged with each other and within the community?*

- *How do the leaders rally the troops and inspire positive change?*

- *What stands out for you as a high point and what did you contribute to the effort?*

- *What are you most proud of having helped the community to accomplish?*

This process may naturally flow into phase 3 of the 4-D cycle, "design phase," where

girls can begin to co-create their ideal future together, based on what they've discovered

about past relationships and dreamed about what is possible in the future (Cooperrider et

al., 2008). Potential coaching questions might include:

- *In what ways could positive relationships have a significant impact on improving*

  the quality of life for girls in your group?

- *What habits or practices stand out as being exceptionally promising in creating*

  lasting positive change?

Ideally, girls can walk away from this process with a clear picture of how they would like

their group to function, or a shared fate. For example, some future ideals might include:

- *Girls only give compliments about personal style (negative comments not spoken*

  aloud)

- *Girls are welcome to sit with anyone and anywhere during lunch, during breaks,*

  etc.

- *Girls spread love (not hate) via social media*

- *Girls speak their truth without fear of judgment/criticism*

- *Girls lift each other up when they are down*

- *Girls celebrate their differences (rather than judge them)*

- *Girls aim to see the best in one another*

- *Girls communicate clearly and effectively, resolving conflicts quickly and respectfully*

Suppressing free riders: This entails putting a stop to behaviors and attitudes that do not align with the group's vision and mission. Doing so is a delicate process, as it can easily be misinterpreted as a punitive action as opposed to a means for upholding group ideals. In addition, there is risk for a girl to assume a "queen bee" position, believing that she is omnipotent and disciplines the rest of the group for acting out (Wiseman, 2002). These issues can be brought to the surface by the facilitating coach when initially explaining the principles of hive culture in order to mitigate any confusion. After the dream and design phases are complete, the coach may simply ask *"When a member of the group does not uphold these ideals, as a group, how would you like to handle it? What might be a healthy, productive and supportive way to remind other group members of your ideals?"* Together, the group can decide the best course of action for conflict resolution. For example:

- *Privately confront the free rider and calmly identify the action that did not uphold the group ideals*

- *Ask for a change in behavior*

- *Enlist the help of an objective and caring adult*

- *Refrain from using social media and other RA tactics to retaliate*

Creating a noble collective mission: This process is the culmination of the dream and design phases. Where *creating a shared fate* primarily emphasizes the process of envisioning possible futures, *creating a noble collective mission* is characterized by a succinct set of core principles that act as a light post for the group's ongoing conduct. It is a way for the girls to capture all of their ideas, hopes and visions for the future of their group in a clear and meaningful way. The coach can facilitate this process by having the girls answer the following questions:

- ***Purpose:*** *What are the opportunities or needs that we exist to address?*

  Example: To create a positive community of girls in which each member can build healthy, sustainable and meaningful friendships.

- ***Action:*** *What are we doing to address these needs?*

  Example: We will support, appreciate, acknowledge and uplift one another.

- ***Values:*** *What principles or beliefs guide our actions?*

  Example: authenticity, compassion, kindness, connectedness

Finally, the coach can help the girls to put these puzzle pieces together in order to create a cohesive mission statement that can guide their behaviors and interactions with one another. For example:

- **Sample Mission Statement:** *The mission of our group is to create a positive community for girls where each member can build healthy, sustainable and meaningful friendships by supporting, appreciating, acknowledging and uplifting one another, so each member can blossom into an authentic, compassionate, kind and connected friend.*

The coach may choose to do a variety of things with this mission statement. If the group of girls meets regularly, encourage the girls to create a poster together so the mission can

be displayed and read aloud at each meeting. If the girls do not meet regularly, the coach

may choose to print copies of the mission statement and distribute to each girl so she may

re-connect with the mission whenever she is feeling tempted to act out against another

girl. Additionally, coaches may leverage relevant social media platforms (Facebook

groups, Twitter parties, etc.) by posting any group-related materials and creating a

common space for the girls to convene outside of group sessions.

Engaging in synchronous rituals: Durkheim (1915/1965) identified the term

collective effervescence to describe ecstatic group rituals and their positive effects. The

cultivation of passion and joy, combined with the dissolving of boundaries between

individuals, helps to bond and equalize all members of the group (Haidt, Seder, &

Kesebir, 2008). Given that synchronous group activities provide a fun and interesting

opportunity to forge group connections, coaches are encouraged to close the group

session by engaging the girls in a physical activity like a group dance, chant, or cheer.

The coach can teach the group a routine, and together the girls can perform the moves as

a cohesive group, in hopes of cultivating positive emotions, greater connectedness and

increased wellbeing. Better yet, the girls can work together to choreograph their own

routine, thereby nurturing teamwork and communication skills.

High Quality Connections

Dutton (2003) claims that establishing quality connections with others is one of

the most powerful strategies for influencing one's wellbeing. Low quality connections,

marked by distrust and disregard for another's worth, can quickly damage one's sense of

competence, humanity and self-worth. Low quality connections are pervasive amongst

teenage girls, and can cause significant damage to one's self-esteem if they are not

closely monitored. In order to combat these negative outcomes, Dutton (2003) offers a

detailed approach to cultivating, nourishing and sustaining high quality connections (HQCs).

HQCs are marked by "mutual positive regard, trust and active engagement on both sides. In a high quality connection, people feel more engaged, more open, more competent. They feel more alive," (Dutton, 2003, p. 2). The benefits of HQCs are plentiful, including greater vitality, overall-wellbeing, greater engagement, improved physical and psychological health, greater willingness and capacity to learn, and increased access to both emotional (positive emotions, support, etc.) and instrumental (information) resources that allow them to thrive (Dutton 2003). Certainly any human could benefit from learning how to cultivate more HQCs, but teen girls appear to be a particularly appropriate demographic given the plethora of negative friendship-related challenges they endure.

HQCs are developed through everyday interactions with others, and research highlights four specific pathways for effectively doing so: *respectful engagement* (engaging others in ways that send messages of value and worth), *task enabling* (ways of interacting that facilitate another's successful performance), and *building trust* (acting in ways that confirms one's integrity, dependability and kindness) and *play* (activities that transcend the selves of individual, produce skills and pleasures, increase engagement, and invite interpersonal risk taking) (Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2012). Because acts of disrespect and betrayals of trust are two particularly common themes that arise in my coaching sessions with girls, the following recommended coaching strategies will focus on respectful engagement and building trust.

Coaching on HQCs

In order to support girls in developing stronger connections and more meaningful friendships, coaches can integrate HQC material into both private and group sessions. In private sessions, coaches can explore the costs and benefits of low and high quality connections with clients by drawing on examples from the client's life, or other relevant sources like movies, books, TV shows etc. It can be helpful to use a fictional example, ultimately drawing parallels to the client's personal experiences. Furthermore, appropriate self-disclosure can be beneficial when trying to highlight a specific point of learning. It is common practice among coaches to share relevant and appropriate personal experiences, as it is reflective of decreased formality of the coaching relationship (Biswas-Diener, 2009). In addition, an appropriate level of transparency can deepen the connection between the coach and client, as sharing vulnerable information is an indication of trust (Dutton, 2003).

Cultivating Trust: Trust is a particularly unique resource in that it increases with use; it creates a self-fulfilling cycle where trust begets trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). In a nutshell, "trust involves acting on positive expectations about other people's behavior and intentions (Dutton, 2003, p. 81). In a trusting relationship, the automatic assumption is that both parties are acting with the other's best interest in mind (Dutton, 2003). Because of the prevalence of backstabbing and betrayals in adolescent female friendships, experience has shown that girls often wait for others to earn their trust before laying their cards on the table. Coaches would be wise to encourage girls to take a more active role in cultivating trust, as taking the first steps in doing so positions clients as hands-on creators of their connections with others while simultaneously jumpstarting

trust's self-fulfilling cycle (Dutton, 2003). In order to build trust, coaches may offer girls the following strategies:

- *Share valuable information*: information increases in value when it is "relevant, rare and non-substitutable" (Dutton, 2003, p.83). It is critical that coaches distinguish between sharing information with the intention of *deepening* a relationship versus *sabotaging* another. For example, a client can cultivate trust by self-disclosing private information from her own life with a friend, but sharing another girl's secret is likely to burn bridges. Sharing valuable information indicates a level of vulnerability and connectedness that transcends the experience of casual acquaintance.

- *Use inclusive language*: Teenage girls are notorious for putting up walls and excluding one another. Language is a powerful tool that can be used to perpetuate the problem, or as means of connection and support. Using simple language of inclusion like "we" can help to express a common purpose or shared identity. Thus, speaking the language of "we" signals a psychological cue that two girls are on the same team, depending on one another and pursuing a common fate (Dutton, 2003). Specifically, sharing credit for accomplishments and successes is a particularly effective way to enlist the trust of others.

- *Assuming the best:* Dutton (2003) emphasizes that a key part of building trust is conveying the belief that others are honest and operate from good intentions. Simmons (2009, p. 36) explains, "When girls use [negative] assumptions to steer their relationships, they do not fully engage with other people." Naturally, this lack of authenticity creates emotional distance and compromises trust. Instead of

jumping to conclusions and assuming the worst, coaches can encourage girls to

slow down and gather more information. In this way, girls leave the door open for

the continuation of a meaningful connection instead of prematurely slamming it

closed.

- *Refrain from demeaning others:* speaking ill of another undermines the trust-

  building process. Girls often seek to assert control by gossiping and spreading

  rumors, but in reality they are eroding the very foundation upon which trust can

  be built (Wiseman, 2002). The age-old adage "think before you speak" is often

  overlooked by girls who are impulsive or eager to please others. Coaches can

  support girls by using real-world examples to highlight the damage demeaning

  remarks can have on trust.

- *Follow through*: adolescents have a reputation as being flaky or unreliable,

  making multiple commitments but rarely sticking to any of them wholeheartedly.

  Coaches can support girls in developing the habit of following through by holding

  girls accountable to their commitments, both inside and outside of sessions. In

  order to establish a reputation of reliability and trustworthiness, girls must

  practice agreeing only to commitments that they can uphold, and owning up

  without excuses should they happen to fall short.

As with ACR, these skills can easily be discussed, explored, role-played and modeled

throughout coaching sessions with adolescent girls.

Being a Giver

Adolescence is frequently characterized by an intense pre-occupation with the

self, as teen girls are often unable to focus on anyone else's experience besides their own

(Pipher, 1994). Although this narcissism is typical, it often prevents girls from forging meaningful bonds with others because it produces selfishness—the antithesis of the reciprocity required for a worthwhile friendship. Coaches can support girls in deepening their friendships by curtailing this self-absorption and encouraging a culture of giving.

Grant (2013) identifies three fundamental styles of social interaction: giving, taking and matching. Givers prefer to give more than they get, takers like to get more than they give and matchers strive to preserve an equal balance of giving and getting (Grant, 2013). These reciprocity styles are primarily distinguished by their differing attitudes and actions towards others. Teen girls are no exception, and I have coached girls who embody each of these descriptions. Consider the giver who spends several hours a week involved in community service projects simply because she understands the value of supporting those in need. Girls who match may invite a classmate to her birthday party, but only after she has been invited to her classmate's party first. The teen girl taker has no problem accepting credit for a "group project" to which she contributed virtually nothing. These varying behaviors and perspectives often have a profound impact on girls' social connections, where givers reap the greatest rewards.

By prioritizing the following values, givers set themselves up to establish positive reputations that attract high quality connections: "helpfulness (working for the well-being of others), responsibility (being dependable)… and compassion (responding to the needs of others)" (Grant, 2013, p. 21). Furthermore, research indicates that when givers experience success, it causes a ripple effect, spreading and cascading success to those around them. On the whole, givers are particularly successful in social domains that support the cultivation of friendship like networking and collaborating (Grant, 2013).

Given the positive outcomes associated with giving, coaches would be wise to support

teen girl clients in cultivating the mental and behavioral habits associated with being a

giver.

It is worth mentioning that although givers are often very successful, they run the

risk of quickly becoming a doormat if they consistently sacrifice their own self-interest

for the sake of others. I often see teen girls who, in their eagerness to please others and

win their approval, give to the point of exhaustion. To that end, it is critical that coaches

support girls in understanding the value of appropriate reciprocation and drawing

boundaries within friendships when necessary.

Coaching on Becoming a Giver

As with each of the previous concepts, the fundamental principles of giving and

taking can easily be discussed and explored in private and group coaching sessions. In

seeking to support girls in becoming more frequent givers, coaches may suggest the

following activities to their adolescent female clients:

- *Test your giver quotient*: self-awareness is a crucial, but often under-developed

    skill among teenage girls that can support and facilitate successful social

    interactions. In order to assess and deepen self-awareness, clients can engage in a

    series of free online tools designed test one's reciprocity style. Clients can take

    the tests at home or during a session, and the results can provide a valuable

    springboard for future discussions on how to increase levels of giving.

    Furthermore, because adolescents often view themselves one way, but behave in

    another, such tests can help clients to better align their self-perceptions with the

reality of their daily actions (Grant, 2013). To take the free survey visit

www.giveandtake.com.

- *Run a reciprocity ring:* when working with a group of girls, coaches can

  encourage giving by facilitating a giving circle. Each group member presents a

  request to the rest of the girls who can then make contributions: "they use their

  knowledge, resources, and connections to help fulfill the request" (Grant, 2013,

  p. 261). For example, if a girl requests advice on confronting a bully, a group

  member can offer support by suggesting conflict resolution strategies or

  encouraging the requester to speak with a trusted adult. In this way, girls not only

  multiply their opportunities to give, but they learn how to ask for help from

  others, show empathy and compassion, cultivate trust and develop HQCs.

- *Master the five-minute favor:* giving doesn't have to cost money or take a

  significant amount of time. Coaches can encourage girls to look for easy ways to

  give back to their friends, as small acts of kindness accrue over time and fortify

  relationships. For example, girls might consider giving a hug to a friend who is

  having a bad day, offering a seat to a girl who looks lonely or tutoring a friend

  who is struggling in class. These simple, but meaningful acts of giving can pave

  the way for the positive ripple effect that comes from successful givers.

- *Just do it:* when seeking to influence another's perspective, individuals often start

  by trying to change someone's attitude in order to achieve the desired behavior.

  However, research indicates that changing one's behavior first is a far more

  powerful approach, and a corresponding attitude adjustment will often follow

  (Grant 2013). To that end, when working with teen girl matchers and takers,

coaches can help girls to brainstorm opportunities to starting giving immediately. Over time, the behavior change can produce a powerful perspective shift, where matchers and takers may come to see themselves as givers (Grant, 2013).

Adolescent female friendships are complex and challenging, but can also be deeply rewarding and fulfilling. To that end, teen girls coaches can leverage their time with girls by educating, exploring and integrating topical information and resources that can support clients in cultivating positive relationships. Specifically, raising awareness around subjects like *active constructive responding, hive culture, high quality connections* and *becoming a giver* can provide valuable solutions to girls' most pressing friendship obstacles.

Future Orientation and Possible Selves

As she approached eleventh grade, Hannah began to feel an internal uneasiness she just couldn't shake. Everyone around her was gearing up for the notoriously hellish experience that is junior year, with SAT prep classes, AP exams and college visits looming right around the corner. To be clear, all of these tasks were to be completed on top of Hannah's already laborious schedule. To make matters worse, Hannah knew deep down that she was different than her friends: she did not know what she wanted to do in the future, but she was certain she did not want to go to college. She was fearful of disappointing her parents or being perceived as a failure by her friends, so she kept this secret to herself and tried to push her anxiety aside. Hannah kept her fear and self-doubt under wraps for as long as she could, but eventually, she buckled under the pressure.

Despite the fact that girls arguably have more opportunities than ever to pursue the future they most desire, I continually see clients who feel trapped by others'

expectations and their own insecurities. Subsequently, girls feel hopeless about their future prospects and react out of fear instead of acting on purpose. Coaches have a unique opportunity to support girls in maximizing their potential by helping them to design a future that inspires them to action and cultivating the most effective mindset for achieving their custom-tailored goals.

Future orientation has been described as a common adolescent developmental task that involves the processes of thinking about and planning for the future and its impact on identity development (Seginer, 2003). The behavioral aspects of future orientation are comprised of exploration (Nurmi, 1989b, 1991), active pursuit of possible future goals, and commitment to specific options for the future (Seginer, 2003). The cognitive and affective-motivational components of future orientation emphasize planning, optimism, content, hopefulness and perceptions of control. (Nurmi, 1987, 1989b, 1991; Seginer, 2003; Trommsdorff, 1983; Trommsdorff, Burger, & Fuschsle, 1982). Taken together, the motivational, cognitive and behavioral aspects of future orientation have the potential to significantly impact the development of an adolescent's sense of self and formation of possible future selves (Abraham, 2010).

Prospection is the process of developing and evaluating possible futures (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007). Evidence indicates that prospection is "a central organizing feature of perception, cognition, affect, memory, motivation, and action" (Seligman, Railton, Baumeister, & Sripada, 2013, p. 119). Prospection is nicely aligned with coaching's future-oriented process as it re-frames the role of the past: where traditional therapeutic models often position the past as a force that categorically determines the future,

prospection suggests that the past is a simply resource from which individuals may draw information that can pro-actively influence prospective representations.

Interestingly, experience shows that adolescents are often ill equipped to accurately prospect possible futures. As previously mentioned, the pre-frontal cortex of the brain that is primarily responsible for future-oriented, goal-directed behavior, is not fully developed until the early 20s or later (Johnson, Blum, & Giedd, 2009). In order to combat this tendency towards maladaptive (and often mistaken) if-then prospection, Seligman et al. (2013) suggest that helping professionals employ four distinct strategies:

1. *Enhancing a client's ability to generate alternative prospections*: increasing affective and imaginative skills, and working through a range of other possible means to the same end.

2. *Developing more effective prospections*: not simply increasing emotional investment in a goal, but offering strategies that increase the likelihood of success.

3. *Disconfirming unrealistic prospections*: proposing new ways of doing things that will disprove improbable future outcomes.

4. *Incentivizing the future*: enhancing the value of difficult-to-achieve futures by establishing meaningful rewards.

Research suggests that adolescents' fears and worries about the future are primarily centered around threats related to "the fulfillment of the major normative life-tasks (unemployment, divorce), non-normative life events related to their parents' family (death and divorce of parents), and global historical events (nuclear war)" (Nurmi, 1991, p. 48). Coaches are well positioned to support adolescent clients in strengthening their

prospection skill set in order to produce positive outcomes associated with a positive

future orientation.

Studies show that a youth's positive (optimistic and hopeful) future orientation

can promote several positive outcomes in adolescent development, including academic

motivation, identity development and general wellbeing (Honora, 2002; Nurmi, 1989a;

Seginer, 2000). Furthermore, youths who are positively oriented toward the future and

focused on possible future goals have been known to exhibit increased self-

understanding, self-concept and an overall sense of personal identity (Abraham, 2010). It

has been suggested that future orientation is a powerful motivational factor for current

and future behaviors that may support the realization of an adolescent's hopes and goals

(Greene & De Backer, 2004). Maintaining a hopeful outlook on the future is likely to

positively impact an adolescent's sense of confidence and ultimately the upward

trajectory of motivation towards and achievement of personal goals.

Possible selves, an illustrative representation of one's ideas about who they might

become, including hoped-for possible selves (HFPS) and feared possible selves (FPS),

support youth in enhancing behavioral motivation in the present (Markus & Nurius, 1986,

1987). Research indicates that a delicate combination of both HFPS and FPS can be

beneficial as it motivates adolescents to avoid possible negative outcomes (as imagined

through the construction of a personal FPS) while staying focused on hopeful desires and

possibilities for the future (Markus & Ruvolo, 1989; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

This research aligns nicely with Grant's (2012) explanation of *approach* and

avoidance goals. Avoidance goals, often lacking in detail and specific outcome targets,

are achieved by moving away from undesirable states (e.g. to be less stressed about

school). Conversely, approach goals are attained by moving towards a specific outcome or desired state (e.g. to confidently walk down the school hallway with my head held high). Significantly, higher levels of depression and lower levels of wellbeing have been found among those who tend to set avoidance goals, whereas higher levels of academic performance and increased wellbeing have been associated with approach goals (Coats, Janoff-Bulman, & Alpert, 1996; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Although both high hopes and palpable fears about the future have the capacity to increase goal-oriented motivation in the present, it appears that emphasizing approach goals and HFPS may prove to be most effective in producing beneficial outcomes.

Unfortunately, it has been my experience that many adolescent girls primarily construct FPS, and focus largely on potential future outcomes that are negative and self-defeating. During coaching sessions, I have witnessed girls with the most promising of prospects describe their future as bleak, stressful and simply not good enough. A clear, realistic FPS, combined with a pessimistic future orientation, is a lethal combination that is all too prevalent among adolescent females. Given that possible selves provide the opportunity for adolescents to envision their potential for the future based on current perceptions of their identity (or, self-esteem), it is no wonder that teen girls are often bogged down by FPS and a negative future orientation. To that end, coaches working with adolescent females are in a prime position to support clients in shifting this pattern. Specifically, when seeking to support clients in achieving a positive future orientation and increase HFPS, coaches can offer positive psychology research and interventions based on *goal setting*, *hope theory*, *mindset and optimism.*

Goal Setting

Motivation theory posits that human behavior is fundamentally goal-directed (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Ford, 1992). Goals create a point of reference against which one evaluates their current standings (Carver & Scheier, 1990). Research suggests that adolescents' goals focus on major age-appropriate developmental tasks (Havighurst, 1948/1974), including future education, occupation, family, and the material aspects of their future life (Nurmi, 1991). Setting, pursuing and achieving goals is particularly relevant to adolescent development, as identity formation and sense of self are directly impacted by the goal striving process (Erikson, 1963).

Adolescents can directly affect their own development towards specific outcomes by identifying goals, selecting strategies for achieving said goals and finally evaluating the outcome of their efforts (Massey, Gebhart, & Garnefski, 2008). Goals are significant to wellbeing as they produce personal standards of self-satisfaction, improve task interest, mitigate boredom and improve clarity (Locke, 1996). Fundamental psychological needs including relatedness (the state of being connected), competence (the ability to do something well) and autonomy (the ability to self-direct and act independently) can provide the necessary motivation for goal striving, and in turn, goal achievement is suggested to satisfy these needs (Affleck et al., 1998; Brunstein, 1993; Harris, Daniels, & Briner, 2003; King, Richards, & Stemmerich, 1998).

Studies show that if a person is committed to a goal, has the requisite level of ability to achieve it, and does not have conflicting goals, difficult goals inspire and produce successful task performance (Locke & Latham, 2006). Locke (1996) explains that self-efficacy, one's task-specific confidence, plays an important role in developing goals that are challenging and meaningful, producing ongoing effort and commitment,

and cultivating self-management that supports follow through. Highlights from thirty years of goal setting research include the following findings (Locke, 1996):

- Goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest performance.

- High commitment to goals is attained when an individual acknowledges the goal as important and believes it is attainable.

- Self-efficacy directly effects performance, the difficulty level of chosen goals, commitment levels, response to setbacks, negative feedback or failure, and strategy selection for goal attainment.

- Goals impact performance by affecting the direction of action, the degree of effort exerted and the persistence of action over time.

- Goals serve as standards of self-satisfaction.

Given that goal attainment results in greater wellbeing and improved self-efficacy beliefs, coaches working with adolescent girls would be wise to integrate interventions that target skills for identifying and pursuing meaningful goals.

Coaching on Goal Setting

Goal setting is a foundational element of coaching, as goals serve as future-oriented benchmarks that help to organize and direct behavior (Biswas-Diener, 2010). Humans are uniquely endowed with the requisite skills for making decisions about the future, including planning, anticipating challenges, mobilizing resources and adapting to unexpected circumstances. Coaches can capitalize on this natural predisposition towards goal setting in order to support clients in achieving greater happiness, a deeper sense of meaning, and increased connectedness (Emmons, 1999). By deepening self-awareness around self-efficacy beliefs, leveraging them to design challenging goals and ultimately

produce goal-aligned actions, coaches can support adolescents in cultivating positive outcome expectations that may produce greater wellbeing. Furthermore, coaches can offer girls tangible tools for designing and pursuing goals that are self-concordant and realistic.

Wheel of Life: The wheel of life is foundational tool for many coaches, as it provides a quick snapshot of a client's current state, but also acts as springboard for goal setting. The coach can use a template (see Appendix K) in order to help girls visualize their life as a whole (the entire wheel) split up into several domains (slices of the wheel). Each slice represents a different area of the adolescent female client's life. For example, domains like *academics, friendships, body image, future, family, sports, etc.* can help girls identify areas of their life where they are thriving, and areas where they are languishing. Coaches can use the following prompts when using the wheel of life during client session (this example will target the domain of *friendships*):

- *Please rate on a scale of one to ten how satisfied you feel with your friendships, where ten means completely satisfied in every way, and zero means completely dissatisfied in every way.*

- *Describe in detail what your friendships would look like if you gave them a seven? A ten? (Note: this is an opportunity to support girls in dreaming big. Encourage clients to imagine a future with endless possibilities, where ideal selves and dream scenarios can exist without judgment or criticism. This type of thinking, which rarely occurs in a girl's average day, can serve to generate hopefulness and optimism about the future.)*

- *What would have to change to increase your rating of your friendships?*

- *What are three things you can do in the next month to bump your friendships from a four to a seven?*

Together, the coach and client can brainstorm and visualize meaningful goals, action steps and outcomes. In this way, coaches can support girls in fostering both pathways and agency thinking that cultivate optimism and hopefulness around future possibilities. Once small goals have been identified in one or several domains, coaches can use the SMART goals model to help girls attain greater clarity, focus and motivation.

SMART Goals: This tool is popular among helping professionals as it synthesizes years worth of research around what makes for an effective, motivation goal. The acronym SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) embodies the building blocks that support clients in achieving increased motivation and improving the odds that the goal will actually be accomplished. Coaches can use the following SMART goals prompts to support girls in creating tangible goals and building progressive momentum (Cothran, & Wysocki, 2005):

- Specific: A goal is specific when it states exactly what the individual intends to accomplish. Increase specificity by answering the following questions:
    - ➢ *Who is to be involved?*
    - ➢ *What is to be accomplished?*
    - ➢ *Where is it to be done?*
    - ➢ *When is it to be done?*
- Measurable*: A goal is measurable if it is quantifiable. First, establish current standings in order measure and track progress. Measurable goals will answer the questions:

> ➢ *How much?*

> ➢ *How many?*

> ➢ *How will you know when it is accomplished?*

- Attainable: A goal is attainable when there is a realistic chance that it can be accomplished. This does not mean the goal should be easy, but rather that the requisite time, resources and focus are available for completion. A goal that is attainable will answer the questions:

  > ➢ *Is it realistic?*

  > ➢ *How can it be accomplished?*

  > ➢ *What skills, attitudes or resources are required?*

- Relevant: A goal that is relevant is aligned with the client's current vision for the future and reflects their ultimate potential. Relevant goals will not conflict with personal values or long-term goals. Relevant goals can be determined by asking the following questions:

  > ➢ *Is this the right time?*

  > ➢ *Are you the right person?*

  > ➢ *Is it worthwhile?*

- Time-bound: A goal that is time-bound has a start and a finish. Limiting the time in which a goal must be accomplished helps to focus effort and marshal resources. Measuring progress at incremental time periods can be helpful. To ensure a goal is time-bound, answer the following questions:

  > ➢ *By when will the goal be completed?*

  > ➢ *What can I do today?*

> ➢ *What can I do 1 week from now?*

> ➢ *What can I do 1 month from now?*

Overall, SMART goals are easy to design targets that can serve to inspire girls to take action. Coaches can use a temple (see Appendix L) during client sessions, and offer clients a copy to keep at home as visual reminder to stay on track. Coaches can help girls to design weekly or daily action steps that will ultimately result in the accomplishment of the SMART goal. In order to support girls in following through, coaches can enlist the client's help in designing rewards and/or consequences for completed/missed action steps. Ultimately, a coach can provide adolescent girls with firm accountability in order to support them in maximizing their potential, increasing self-efficacy and developing optimism about future goals.

Feedback: Direct feedback has been shown to be an important factor in goal striving and attainment (Locke, 1996). In order for goal pursuit to be most effective, clients need methods of checking or tracking their progress toward their goal. Coaches can support teen girl clients by checking in regularly and keeping track of actions taken. Furthermore, direct feedback from a coach can address a variety of factors including the content of the goal, the intensity of the client's pursuit of the goal, the difficulty level of the goal itself, the specificity and clarity of the client's vision of the goal, the client's ability to overcome setbacks and obstacles, and the client's creativity, flexibility and adaptability in finding solutions throughout the goal setting and attainment process. In this way, girls are given an opportunity to take an objective look at their efforts and progress.

Re-framing: It is worth mentioning that there is a dark side to goal setting that often goes unexamined. Personal experience shows that many girls are plagued by an intense fear of failure that is easily exacerbated by the pressure to achieve a lofty goal. In these cases, goal setting can produce anxiety rather than hope and motivation (Biswas-Diener, 2008). Trying and failing is perceived to be more painful and embarrassing than simply not trying at all, thus creating a deep seeded fear that often prevents girls from realizing their true potential. Furthermore, girls' failure impact predictions (what will go wrong in the event of failure) produce increased stress and negative rumination (Pomerantz, Saxon, & Oishi, 2000).

To combat this tendency, coaches can support girls in re-framing their understanding of failure: instead of seeing failure as an embarrassing, permanent mark of shame and unworthiness, failure can be understood as valuable feedback that can be a source of important information about performance (Biswas-Diener, 2008). Furthermore, adversity can strengthen individuals and even open doors to a greater sense of purpose and meaning (Young-Eisendrath, 2008). The simple but powerful adage "when one door closes, another door opens" appears to neatly capture the essence of contextualizing challenges as opportunities for learning and growth.

Next, coaches can help adolescent female clients by shifting their focus away from their shortcomings and toward previous achievements, resources, short-term milestones and general progress in order to increase positivity, optimism and hopefulness. In such situations, coaches may use powerful open-ended questions to achieve these outcomes. For example (Biswas-Diener, 2008):

- *What progress have you made so far?*

- *Tell me about a time you have been successful in achieving a similar goal in the past.*

- *What resources can you leverage to help with this goal?*

- *What excites you about this goal?*

- *How can you manage your expectations when you encounter setbacks?*

- *How can you re-design or re-frame this goal to make it more inspiring?*

- *Tell me about a time you struggled to reach a goal but overcome the obstacles. Which tactics can you apply to your current situation?*

This kind of re-framing can serve to increase self-efficacy by emphasizing success and progress rather than shortcomings and failures. Because self-efficacy plays an important role in goal achievement, coaches would be wise to help clients identify self-limiting beliefs that may hinder their future success. Such beliefs often crop up while designing future goals, subsequently invoking fear, anxiety and insecurity about one's ability to achieve. Once these negative beliefs have been identified, clients can learn to spot them in the heat of the moment, and re-focus their attention on tangible signs of progress or improvement. In this way, coaches can make a positive impact on adolescent girls' future orientation and development of possible selves by employing a variety of tools and strategies that facilitate goal clarity and achievement, thereby bolstering optimism, hopefulness and self-efficacy.

For many adolescent girls, thinking about the future engenders fear, anxiety and insecurity. In turn, these negative feelings often lead to self-doubt that produces self-defeating inaction. In order to support girls in seeing the future as a place of inspiring possibility and in maximizing their potential for massive growth and achievement,

coaches can strategically integrate and leverage appropriate tools from the extensive research on hope theory, growth mindset and optimism.

Hope Theory

Hope has come to be understood as a powerful change agent and an active ingredient in positive psychological change. Hope has been characterized as a human strength that facilitates the clear conceptualization of goals, the development of strategies for reaching those goals and the capacity to trigger and sustain the necessary motivation for goal completion (Synder et al., 1991). Snyder's hope theory moves beyond surface level wishful thinking to a deeper understanding of how intentional thought can produce adaptive action (Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011). While positive psychology concepts like optimism and problem solving give varying significance to individual goal-pursuit factors like future-oriented agency or the goal itself, hope theory attributes equal importance to all components (Lopez et al., 2004). Both *pathways* (strategies for reaching goals) and *agency* (initial and sustained motivation) are critical factors in achieving goals and increasing wellbeing, but neither is sufficient in and of itself. They are indeed reciprocal and therefore require thoughtful combination and integration into daily life in order to produce beneficial rewards. While there is variability in the level of hope that one individual might possess as compared to another, research has shown that individuals with higher levels of hope perform better academically and athletically, are healthier, exhibit more adaptive problem solving skills and are more well-adjusted psychologically (Snyder, 2002; Snyder, Cheavens & Michael, 1999).

Coaching on Cultivating Hope

Coaches can support girls by naming and nurturing hope through a variety of formal and informal strategies. Specifically, this strength can be accentuated through hope *finding, bonding and reminding* (Lopez et al., 2004).

Hope finding: Hope exists on a continuum, ranging from a stable trait to a temporary state of mind. Finding the hope within a teen girl client is critical to building her personal resources in preparation for positive change. For girls who enjoy surveys and questionnaires, administering the Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) can produce formal results that reflect the client's level of hopefulness.

Narrative techniques, informal stories used to illustrate hope theory, may be used to support girls in making hope a personally relevant and accessible factor in improving wellbeing. The benefits of this technique are a direct result of combining and integrating cognitive and emotional elements of the individual's narratives in everyday life. After sharing a story of hope, using fictitious or real characters, coaches can deepen client learning by asking thoughtful questions like:

- *How was movement toward the goal initiated?*

- *How was movement maintained?*

- *What were the biggest barriers to reaching the goals?*

- *What emotions did these barriers elicit?*

- *How were barriers overcome, and what steps were taken to reach the goals?*

  (Lopez et al., 2004)

Hope profiling is another informal strategy coaches can use to cultivate hope. Coaches may ask the client to write several short stories of past personal goal pursuits in

order to highlight the role of hope in one's psychology makeup. Reviewing these stories can support girls in identifying goal striving, pathway thinking and agency resources.

Hope bonding: Building a strong alliance with adolescent female clients is not only crucial for the success of the coaching relationship, but research indicates that hope flourishes when people develop a strong bond to one or more caregivers (Synder et al., 1997). Bonding with clients based on hope theory principles is beneficial given that goal-directed thinking almost always develops in the context of others who teach hope (Snyder, 2000). The process of hope bonding includes respectfully negotiating goals, brainstorming several different pathways towards goal attainment and leveraging the positive energy generated through the connection of the coach and client in order to achieve desired goals (Lopez et al., 2004). In this way, an effective coaching relationship can successfully increase an adolescent girl's level of hope, just by virtue of the nature of the relationship itself.

Additionally, coaches can support girls in building hopeful alliances with others by helping girls to identify existing relationships that stymie hope, and encouraging the development of new relationships that increase hope. Associating with those who actively support the client's goal pursuits, encourage the pursuit of stretch goals and offer support in overcoming barriers can cultivate hope for the future.

Hope reminding: Hope reminding strategies encourage the generation and integration of hopeful thoughts through self-monitoring and ongoing practice. Throughout the coaching process, it is easy for clients to take one step forward and two steps back. Thus, coaches can support adolescent girl clients in making ongoing progress by deepening their self-awareness around thinking patterns, as being able to identify goal

and barrier thoughts is crucial to the hope-reminding process (Lopez, 2004). For instance, a prompt like, "Tell me about a time when you felt hopeless but managed to rise above. Describe the thoughts that inspired you to persist in the face of a challenge." Identifying such thoughts cues the cognitive feedback loop, allowing girls to pause and reflect on hopeful possibilities. Furthermore, coaches can make note which hope-inducing strategies were most effective for each client, and duplicate those exercises with intention during future hope-boosting sessions.

Mindset and Optimism

Dweck (2006) contends that mindset, one's established set of attitudes, has the capacity to drastically impact their ability to achieve and succeed in the future. A *fixed mindset*, or the belief that one's qualities are carved in stone, creates an urgency to prove one's self repeatedly by emphasizing a limited ability to affect change on one's reality. Those who believe in fixed traits are constantly in danger of being defined by failure, and suffering the detrimental consequences of shame. Brown's (2006) working definition of shame, "an intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging" (p. 45) perfectly articulates the damaging results that I have seen repeatedly when coaching girls with a fixed mindset. Furthermore, Brown's (2006) concept of the "shame web" conceptualizes how females experience shame: a messy tangle of conflicting and competing expectations that limits interpretations of who women are "supposed to be" and subsequently creates a feeling of "stuck or trapped" (p. 46). Thus, girls who exhibit a fixed mindset often fail to think forward about the future in ways that are hopeful, inspired or optimistic, as they feel

trapped by their perceived inability to bring about positive change. Instead, they are paralyzed by their shame and overwhelmed by the certainty of failure.

Conversely, Dweck (2006) explains that the *growth mindset* is rooted in the belief that qualities and skills can be cultivated through intentional effort, thus spurring increased hope and optimistic thinking. When individuals believe they can directly impact their future by developing the necessary skills or qualities, failure becomes an opportunity for learning as opposed to a death sentence. Furthermore, effort and action become the keys to positive growth by igniting even the smallest modicum of ability and turning it into accomplishment.

Dweck's research on mindset is well supported by Seligman's 25 years of research on optimists and pessimists, confirming that one's outlook has a direct impact of the trajectory of their future. Seligman (1990/1998/2006) explains that one's *explanatory style*, or the way in which one habitually explains why events happen, can either facilitate increased optimism or produce enduring pessimism. Seligman suggests that explanatory style involves three domains: *permanence, pervasiveness and personalization*. Accordingly, pessimists believe that bad events are enduring, will undermine everything they do and are entirely their own fault. Conversely, optimists believe that setbacks are temporary, specific to one situation and only take responsibility for what they can control. Hundreds of studies have shown that pessimists give up more easily and become depressed more frequently (Seligman, 1990/1998/2006). On the other hand, optimists enjoy greater health and perform better in school and on the playing field. In this way, an optimistic explanatory style is the antidote to learned helplessness, the quitting response

that occurs when one has a fixed mindset, believing that no matter how much effort is put

forth, failure in inevitable.

Some argue that optimism is "unrealistic" and results in self-deception

(Schneider, 2001). It turns out, however, that realistic optimism, or the ability to maintain

a positive outlook while checking with the available information within the reality around

you can result in positive outcomes (Masten, 2001). For example, optimistic thinkers (as

opposed to pessimistic thinkers) focus on solutions when change is possible, are less

likely to deny and avoid problems, and learn from failures by finding meaning in

setbacks (Saltzberg, 2014). All of these tendencies taken together result in beneficial

outcomes like longer life, higher GPA and better performance under pressure (Saltzberg,

2014).

Research indicates that adolescents' thinking about the future becomes more

internal with age, and girls showed a greater tendency to become more pessimistic than

boys (Nurmi, 1991). Girls who are struggling to navigate the choppy waters of

adolescence often fall prey to a fixed mindset and a pessimistic explanatory style. To be

expected, this tendency results in hopelessness about the future and stymies inspiration,

motivation and intentional action. In turn, girls' self-esteem is negatively impacted,

creating a vicious cycle of negative rumination and apathetic inaction.

Coaching on Mindset and Optimism

Fortunately, psychological research has found that individuals can actually *choose*

the way in which they think about and interpret various aspects of life (Seligman,

1990/1998/2006). To that end, coaches can support girls by offering tools and strategies

for adopting a growth mindset and an optimistic explanatory style.

First, coaches can educate girls about the differences between a fixed and growth mindset. Encouraging girls to identify and reflect on individuals from their own lives who exhibit each kind of mindset can help them to deepen their understanding of the costs and benefits of each outlook. Furthermore, this discussion can prompt girls to take note of the mindsets of their friends, and the subsequent impact of being surrounded by optimisms or pessimists. As an additional resource, coaches can offer clients an image that depicts the differences between growth and fixed mindsets (see Appendix M). Clients can engage with this visual reminder by hanging it in an easily accessible place like inside a school locker or on a bathroom mirror at home.

Intentional questioning: Coaching often employs powerful, open-ended questions and prompts new perspectives and ideas (Biswas-Diener, 2009). Coaches can help adolescent female clients shift from a fixed to a growth mindset through conversation and an intentional line of questioning. This process is often unsettling, as fixed traits may form the basis of a girl's identity, and validating such traits can become the main path towards building self-esteem (Dweck, 2008). Coaches can suggest that girls use the following questions to frame their daily activities (Dweck, 2008):

- *What are the opportunities for learning and growth today? For myself? For the people around me?*

- *When, where and how will I take advantage of these opportunities? Be specific.*

- *How will I handle inevitable setbacks and obstacles?*

- *What do I need to do in order to continue my personal growth? Who can help me? What resources do I need to tap?*

In time, such questions can become a habitual way of thinking about and approaching one's daily life. Furthermore, girls can learn to see that challenges are a natural and important part of life that can serve as invaluable learning opportunities. In this way, coaches can instill a growth mindset in adolescent girls who struggle to envision a hopeful, positive and successful future.

Biswas-Diener (2010) offers a complimentary set of questions about growth experiences that coaches can use to support teen girl clients in feeling energized and self-assured (Biswas-Diener, 2010):

- *Tell me about a time when you performed in a way that exceeded your own expectations or beliefs about your capabilities.*

- *In what area of your life have you experienced ongoing positive growth or change?*

- *Tell me about a time you learned an invaluable lesson from making a mistake or failing.*

- *When have you experienced an "exception to the rule" in your own personality or abilities? For example, if you consider yourself to be lazy, tell me about a time when you felt highly motivated.*

This type of questioning can support girls in thinking more broadly about their capacity for growth, change and success, resulting in increased optimism and hope for the future.

Best Possible Self: The "best possible self" exercise is a traditional coaching tool that provides clients with an opportunity to dream big about the future, envision success in a variety of domains and identify the characteristics that allowed them to achieve their goals. This activity has been shown to increase positive emotions, happiness levels,

optimism, hopefulness, improve coping skills, and elevate positive expectations about the future (Niemic, 2013). Coaches can use the following prompts to support girls creating a personally meaningful and invigorating vision of their future:

- *Select a future time period (6 months, 1 year, 5 years from now) and imagine that at that time you are fully expressing your best possible self. Visualize your best possible self in a way that is exciting and relevant to you.*

- *Envision your best possible future self in as much detail as possible, imagining what it looks and feels like to reach your full potential, hit an important milestone, or accomplish a meaningful goal. Do your best to avoid unrealistic fantasies. Instead, focus on a future that is positive and attainable within reason.*

- *Once you have a clear and vivid vision, write down as many details as possible. Writing your down your vision for your best possible future self helps to solidify goals, shifting you away from the realm of foggy ideas and scattered thoughts, towards concrete, real possibilities.*

- *What personal strengths or resources do you envision yourself engaging when you are at your best in the future? What strengths, skills, qualities or resources do you envision using on your path to becoming your best possible future self?*

After clients have completed the exercise, coaches can support clients in developing goals and action plans towards achieving their best possible future self. In addition, coaches can keep this vision top of mind by re-visiting the client's writing in future sessions in order to sustain motivation.

     Distraction and disputation: Seligman (1990/1998/2006) suggests two ways for dealing with pessimistic thoughts: *distraction* and *disputation*. Distractions can be

valuable in helping clients to avoid ruminating on negative thoughts that produce fear and

sadness. Coaches can help clients to brainstorm a list of healthy distractions that can shift

attention elsewhere. For example, a distraction list might include activities like going for

a walk around the block, calling a friend, surfing the internet or reading a book. Other

distractions might include making a written note of the thought and throwing it away or

assigning a later time to address the thoughts.

Disputation, another way to combat destructive thinking, is a skill that involves

arguing against negative thoughts or beliefs. There are four ways coaches can support

girls in making their disputations compelling and realistic (Seligman, 1990/1998/2006):

1. ***Evidence****: Hunt for evidence to confirm the negative thought is factually*

   incorrect. This process helps to halt catastrophic or irrational thinking.

2. ***Alternatives****: Scan for all possible contributing causes to the negative thought—*

   not simply the most permanent pervasive and personal one (as in the pessimistic

   explanatory style).

3. ***Implications****: In the event that negative thoughts or beliefs are in fact rooted in*

   truth and reality, de-catastrophize them by identifying the implications and

   repeating the hunt for evidence that supports them. Ideally, the evidence will

   indicate that the implications are less painful than previously imagined.

4. ***Usefulness****: Assess the value of the negative thought or belief by asking, "Is this*

   thought helping or hurting?" If the answer is hurting, use a distraction technique

   to shift attention.

Perspective can be incredibly powerful in shaping an adolescents view of the

future. A pessimistic outlook or fixed mindset can result in a paralyzing fear of failure

and a lack of motivation. In order to support the next generation of young women in looking at the future through the lens of positive possibilities, coaches can offer tools and strategies that inspire greater optimism and a mindset that facilitates future growth.

Future Considerations

The world of adolescent girls is fast paced and ever-changing. In order to support future generations of girls in maximizing their potential and living the best life possible, adults who interact with teens will need to stay on the forefront of new research that sheds light on strategic interventions that facilitate flourishing. To date, little research has been conducted on the relationships between coaching, positive psychology and teenage girls. To that end, the interventions suggested in this paper have largely been chosen based on personal experience and theoretical fit. To support the effective application of positive psychology concepts to the adolescent demographic, researchers would be wise to pay increased attention to this critically important age group. On the same token, coaches who work with adolescent females can benefit from staying abreast of the most current positive psychology research that can offer empirically valid interventions for increasing client wellbeing.

In reviewing the relevant literature for this paper, it has become clear that there are several gaps in the research that are preventing coaches from leveraging positive psychology to the fullest extent in their sessions with teen girls. To that end, possible future research topics may include:

- At what ages are girls most receptive to positive psychology research and interventions?
- How do cultural and socio-economic factors impact the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions and/or the coaching process?

- What role(s) can parents play in teaching, modeling and cultivating protective factors like resilience and increased positive emotions?

- As technology continues to evolve, how can we capitalize on cell phone applications and electronic games to entice the adolescent demographic?

- How can coaching become more accessible to teen girls who are experiencing economic hardship?

- Which interventions are best facilitated by a coach, and which strategies may be best leveraged by a teacher, parent, mentor, etc.?

- Aside from those listed in this paper, what additional positive psychology research topics and interventions are most appropriate for the teen girl demographic?

Overall, there is a great need for more research that specifically targets adolescent girls and their most pressing challenges. Topics like relational aggression and fear of the future are often discussed tangentially or superficially. Worse yet, topics like low self-esteem and bullying have come to feel like hollow talking points with girls, as they have become commercialized, catch-all phrases without much focus on action oriented solutions. To that end, research targeting tried and true interventions that can act as preventative measures for a host of specific teen girl challenges will support coaches affecting maximum positive change.

Conclusion

Adolescence, a life stage best known for tumultuous transitions and difficult life experiences, is a pivotal time in the course of human development. Given that teens are entrenched in the intense processes of identity formation, socialization and academic advancement, navigating life's complicated challenges alone can be confusing and

distressing. Life coaching for adolescents has become an increasingly popular pathway towards supporting teens in overcoming obstacles, maximizing potential and improving overall wellbeing. Positive psychology has bolstered the coaching process by contributing empirically valid and research-supported interventions that can affect lasting positive change on adolescent girls.

Adolescent girls, in particular, exhibit significant difficulty in managing challenges around self-esteem, friendships and future orientation. Taken together, these three life domains have the potential to negatively impact girls on every conceivable level: intrapersonally, interpersonally and globally. To that end, coaching can be a valuable process for offering efficacious tools and strategies that teen girls can implement in order to improve communication, cultivate hope and optimism, and develop deep seeded resilience. Coaches can look to the research and findings of positive psychology for reliable interventions that can support the next generation of girls in living the best life possible.

My hope for the future is simple: teenage girls will look to positive psychology coaches for the guidance, support and accountability they need in order to thrive. In turn, girls will learn the skills and tools they need to become masterful at affecting positive change on their own lives. Subsequently, communities of such self-sufficient and action-oriented young women will ban together, thus paving the way for a generation of optimistic, passionate and inspired change makers.

Coaches, the call to action has been declared. What will you do today to lift up the girls of tomorrow?

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Appendix A

ABC Model

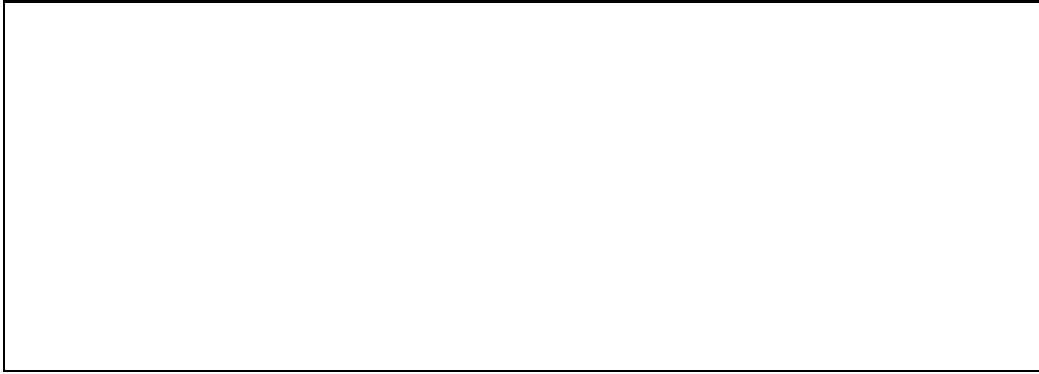| |
|---|
| **Activating Event:**
(Describe a Recent Adversity – keep it objective and stick to the facts) |
| |
| **Beliefs / Thoughts:**
(What did you say to yourself in the heat of the moment? What came up automatically?) |
| |
| **Consequences:**
Emotions and behaviors
(Feel & Do) |
| |
| **Reflections:**
What did you learn from this? |

Appendix B

B-C Connections

Beliefs	Emotional Consequence(s)
Loss- I have lost something	sadness/withdrawal
Danger- something bad is going to happen	anxiety/agitation
Trespass/Rights Violation-I have been harmed	angry/aggressive
Inflicting Harm- I have caused harm	guilt
Negative Comparison- I don't measure up	embarrassment/hiding
Positive Contribution- contributed in a positive way	pride/sharing, planning for future achievements
Appreciating What You Have Received- I received a gift that I value	gratitude/giving back, paying forward
Positive Future- I can overcome challenging situations and affect positive change	hope/energizing, taking action

(Saltzberg, 2014; Reivich & Shatté, 2002)

Appendix C

Thinking Traps Summary

Trap Name	What it involves (recognizing the trap)	Reminder (say to yourself)	Ask Yourself (to get out of the trap)
Jumping to conclusions	**Ready, fire, aim:** Believing one is certain of the meaning of the situation despite little or no evidence to support it.	**Slow down**	What is the evidence?
Tunnel vision	**Can't see the forest for the trees:** Focusing on less significant details in a situation, while screening out the more important aspects.	**Include more**	What salient info did I miss?
Overgeneralizing	**Character assassination:** Settling on global beliefs about one's general lack of worth or ability on the basis of a single situation.	**Look at behaviour**	Is there a specific behaviour that explains the situation?

Trap Name	What it involves (recognizing the trap)	Reminder (say to yourself)	Ask Yourself (to get out of the trap)
Magnifying and minimizing	**Wrong side of the binoculars:** Errors in evaluating events in which the negative aspects of a situation are magnified and the positive aspects are minimised (or vice-versa).	**Be even-handed**	What positive events occurred?
Personalizing	**Me, me, me:** The tendency to automatically attribute the cause of an event to one's personal characteristics or actions.	**Look outward**	How did others or circumstances contribute to what happened?
Externalizing	**Them, them, them:** The tendency to automatically attribute the cause of an event to other people or to circumstances.	**Look inward**	How did I contribute to what happened?
Mind reading	**The Great Walendo:** Assuming that you know what the other person is thinking, or expecting another person to know what you are thinking.	**Speak up**	What could you say or ask to increase understanding?

Trap Name	What it involves (recognizing the trap)	Reminder (say to yourself)	Ask Yourself (to get out of the trap)
Emotional Reasoning	**All these feelings:** Drawing conclusions (which may turn out to be false) about the nature of the world based on one's emotional state.	**Separate feelings from the facts**	Are my feelings accurately reflecting the facts of the situation?

Based on information from Karen Reivich's MAPP lecture, February 2013 with additional support from Andrew Soren, Karen Warner, Rosie Hancock and Jinkai Chen, MAPP.
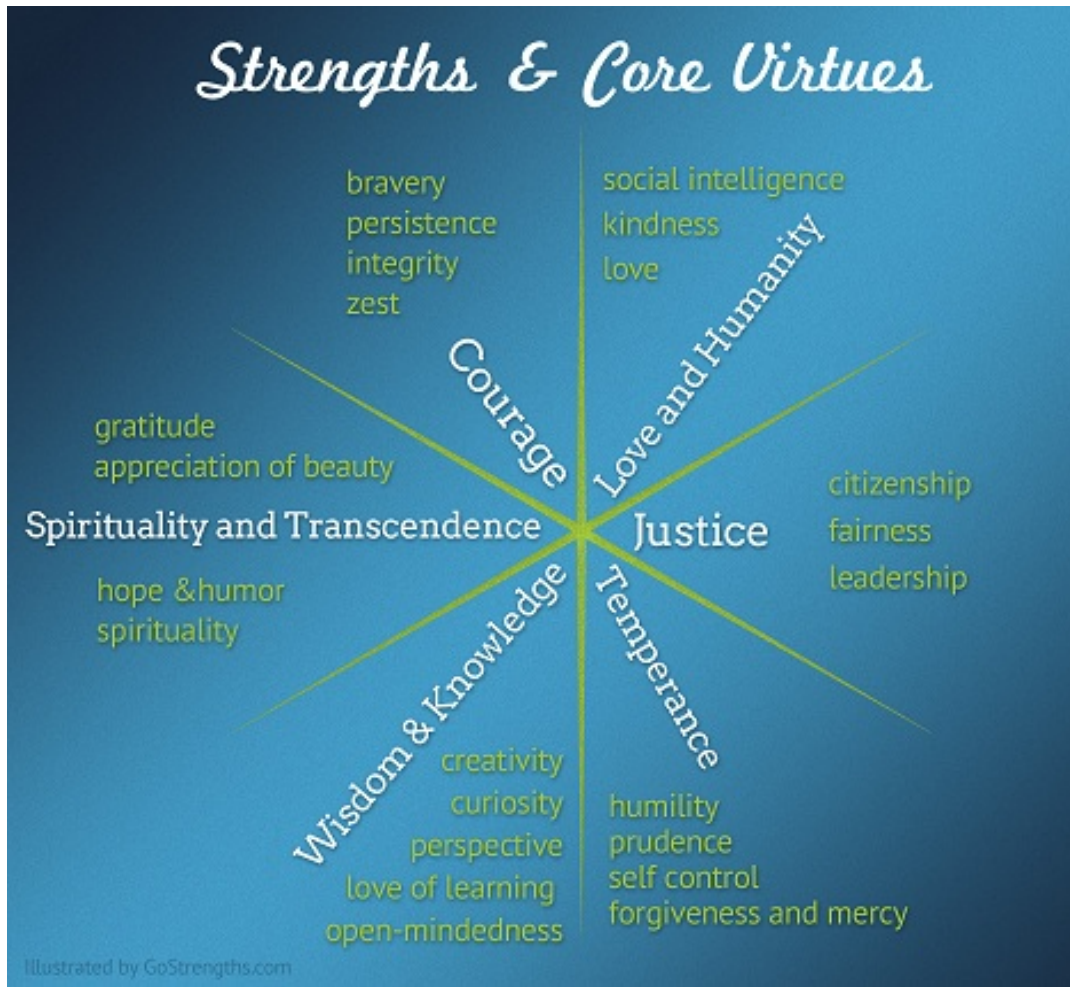
Appendix D

Putting it in Perspective
(Reivich & Shatté, 2002)

Adversity:				
Step 1: Worst-Case Beliefs	**Step 2: How Likely?**	**Step 3: Best-Case Scenario**	**Step 4: Most Likely Outcomes**	**Step 5: Solutions**

Appendix E

The VIA Classification of Character Strengths

Appendix F

Temporal Forms of Savoring (Bryant, 2003)

Temporal Forms of Savoring	Description
Reminiscing (past)	Reflecting on the past in order to re-ignite positive emotions
Savoring the Moment (present)	Becoming mindful during an experience and prolonging your enjoyment
Anticipating (future)	Looking forward to an upcoming positive event

Appendix G

Types of Savoring

(Bryant & Veroff, 2007)

	Focus of Attention: Internal Self	**Focus of Attention:** External World
Type of Experience: Cognitive Reflection	**Basking** (pride)	**Thanksgiving** (gratitude)
Type of Experience: Experiential Absorption	**Luxuriating** (pleasure)	**Marveling** (awe)

Appendix H

10 Strategies for Savoring

1. **Share your good feelings**: seek out others to share positive experiences with and think about re-living a memory through sharing

2. **Take a mental picture**: actively store images for future recall, form vivid "mental photographs"

3. **Congratulate yourself:** enjoy the act of cognitive basking, tell yourself how proud or impressed you and/or others are after achieving a success

4. **Compare the outcome to something else or something worse:** get perspective, contrast your own feelings with feelings of others, compare the current situation to past experiences that have been worse

5. **Sharpen your sensory perceptions:** intensify pleasure by focusing on certain stimuli and screening out others, concentration on positive vigilance by slowing down

6. **Get absorbed in the moment:** engage in mindfulness without cognitive reflection

7. **Express yourself:** laugh, jump for joy, engage in outward physical manifestations of positive emotions

8. **Remember that time flies:** remind yourself how fleeting the moment is, tell yourself to enjoy it while it lasts

9. **Acknowledge gratitude:** show appreciation and give thanks

10. **Avoid kill-joy thinking:** refrain from upward comparisons, negative self-talk, pessimism, etc.

Appendix I

Meditation Resources

Online Audio Guided Meditations

- ➢ http://positivityresonance.com/meditations.html

- ➢ http://www.self-compassion.org/guided-self-compassion-meditations-mp3.html

- ➢ http://www.tarabrach.com/audioarchives-guided-meditations.html

- ➢ http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22

- **Cell Phone Applications**

  - ➢ Simply Being

  - ➢ Omvana

  - ➢ Silva Meditate

  - ➢ Get Some Headspace

  - ➢ Meditate

  - ➢ Calm

  - ➢ Breathe2Relax

- **Podcasts**

  - ➢ Meditation Peace

  - ➢ Guided Meditations

  - ➢ Meditation Oasis

- **Books**

- ➢ *8 Minute Meditation*

- ➢ *Buddha in Blue Jeans: An Extremely Short Simple Zen Guide to Sitting Quietly*

Appendix J

Response Styles

Active Destructive: Verbalizing reasons why the shared positive event is a bad or negative thing. Nonverbally displaying negative emotions such as furrowing your brow or frowning.

> **Example:** "That sounds like a lot of responsibility to take on. There will probably be more stress involved in the new position and longer hours at the office."

Passive Destructive: Not acknowledging the other's good news at all. Responding with a statement that has nothing to do with the statement that was made, and making little to no eye contact or turning away.

> **Example:** "What are we doing on Friday night?"

Passive Constructive: You acknowledge the event as positive, but that's it. You might make an affirming statement, but you ask no questions. There is little to no active emotional expression in your voice or on your face.

> **Example:** "That is good news."

Active Constructive: Asking the person to *relive* the event with you; the more time he/she spends reliving the event, the better! Ask questions and conveying genuine interest.

> **Example:** "That is great! I know how important that promotion was to you. We should go out and celebrate and you can tell me what excites you most about your new job."

<div align="center">Appendix K</div>

<div align="center">

Wheel of Life

</div>

Directions: With the center of the wheel as 0 and the outer edge as an ideal 10, rank your level of satisfaction with each life area by drawing a straight or curved line to create a new outer edge (see example). The new perimeter of the circle represents your Wheel of Life. How bumpy would the ride be if this were a real wheel? Let's look at areas where you want to improve your level of satisfaction and begin to think about what you might do about it.

Example
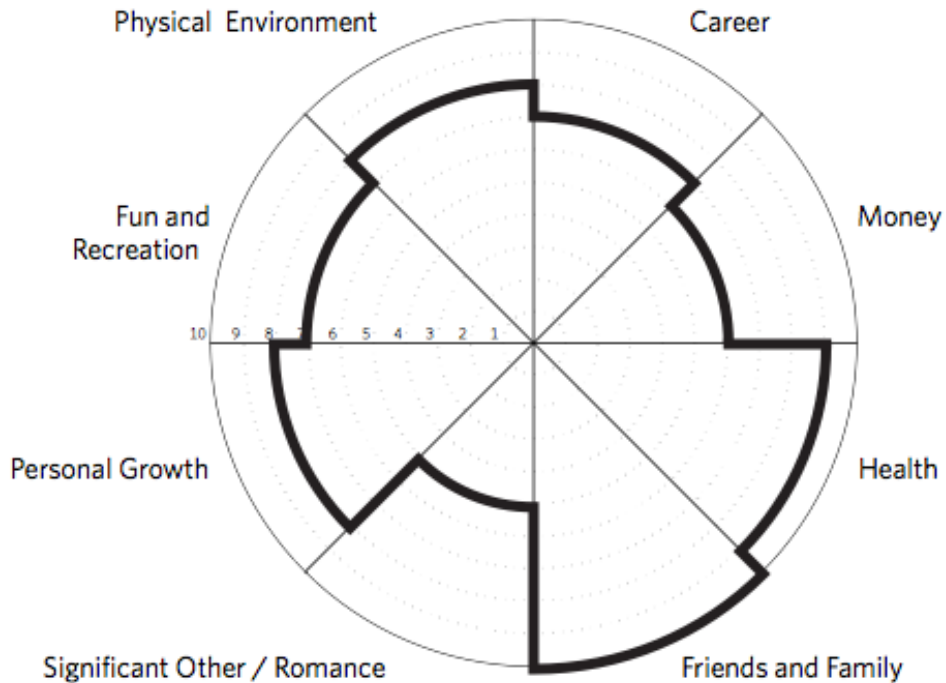
Co-Active Coaching (2nd ed.) © 2007 by Laura Whitworth, Karen Kimsey-House, Henry Kimsey-House, and Phillip Sandahl. Permission is hereby granted to reproduce this page for client use.

NOTE: Coaches and clients are recommended to label each pie slice together, based on the various aspects of the client's life.

Appendix L

SMART Goal Planning Form

S=Specific   **M**=Measurable   **A**= Attainable   **R**=Relevant   **T**= Time-Bound

**Specific**: What do I want to accomplish? Who is involved? Why- reasons, purpose or benefits?

Measurable: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable: How can the goal be accomplished? Is it realistic? What skills, attitudes or resources are required?

Relevant: Is this the right time? Are you the right person? Is it worthwhile?

Time-Bound: By when will my goal be completed? What can I do today? 1 month from now? 6 months from now?

Appendix M

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset
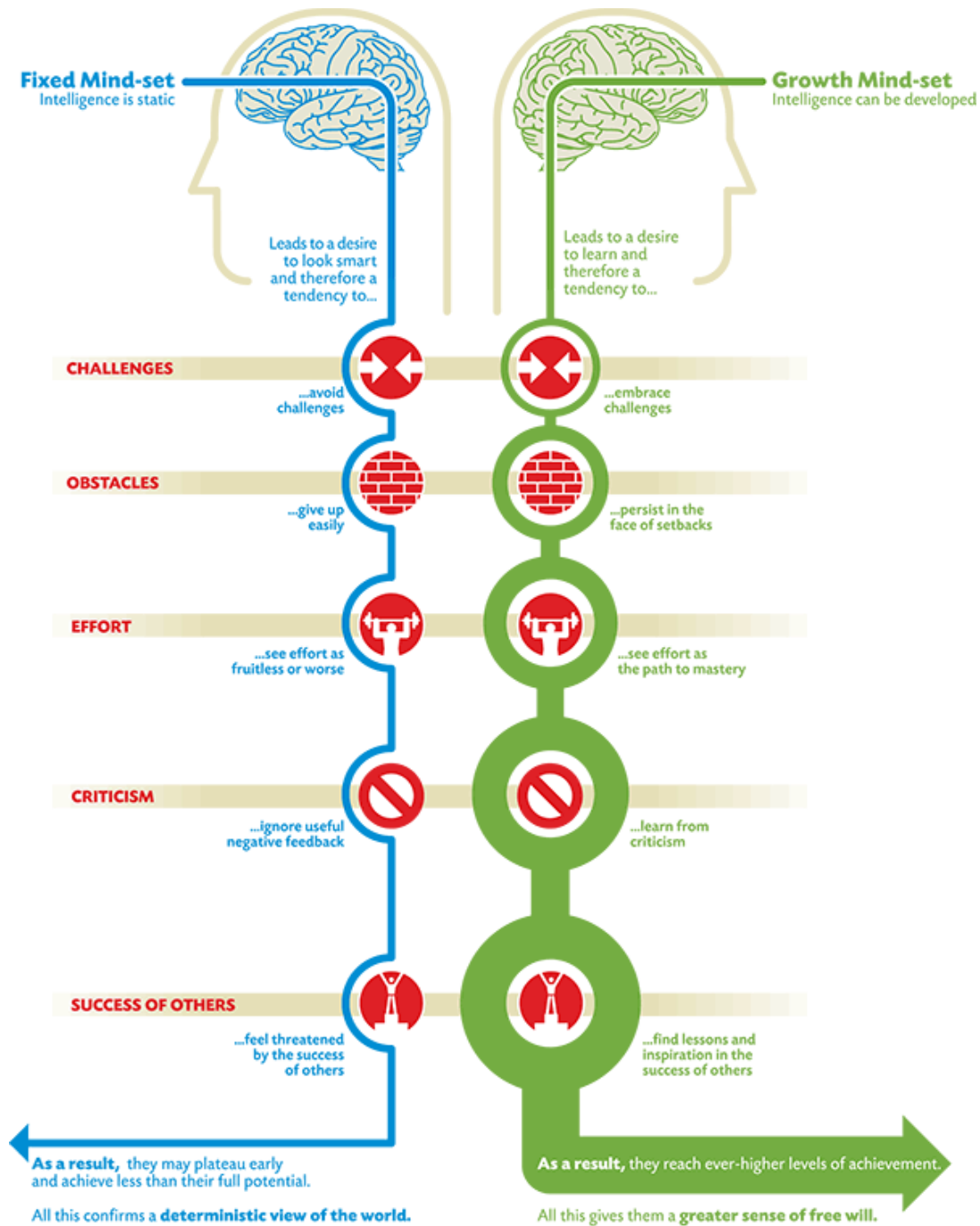
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