

Your
WELLBEING
Makeover

Positive
TEACHER NETWORK



We talk about wellbeing a lot at the Positive Teacher Network because it encompasses more than just happiness. It includes fulfilment, engagement, meaning, accomplishment and health. How we define wellbeing might be quite personal, we will probably include the areas that are most important to us right now, or maybe even notice the areas that are missing for us.

A field that studies the concept of wellbeing and has tried to define it is Positive Psychology. What I love about positive psychology is that it is a constantly evolving discipline. Psychologists are not there to 'prove' something. They are there to learn, explore, understand and offer insights based on research. This means there are no promises that one idea will work for everyone that tries it, but you can be assured that at least the tool works for many people rather than having to start from scratch and learn everything by trial and error yourself.

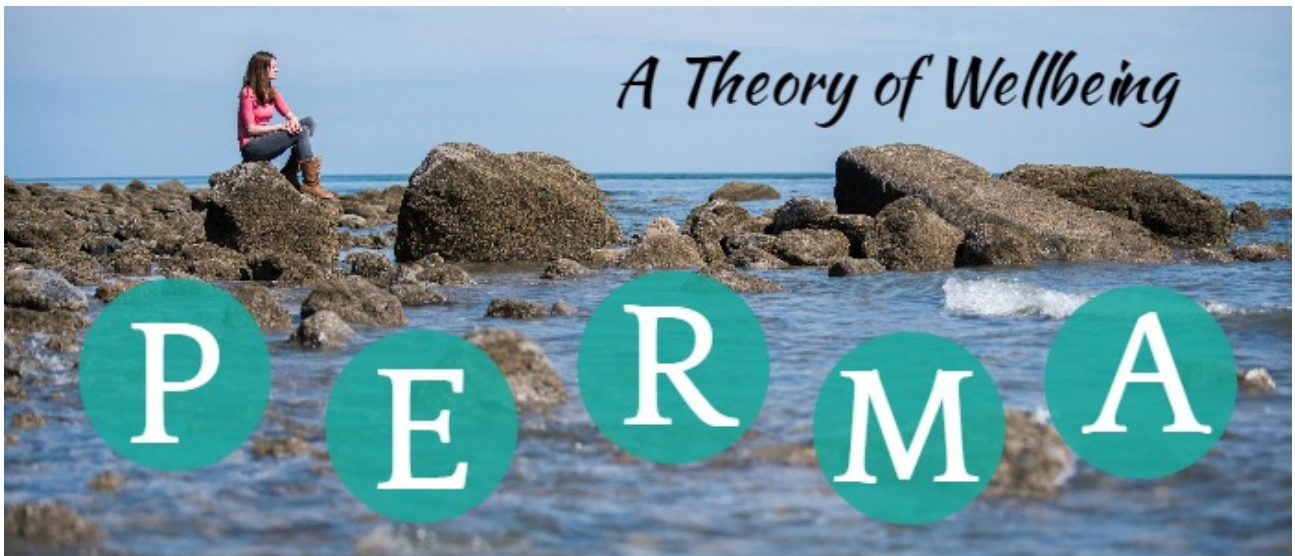
Why is this important for a 'Wellbeing Makeover'?

This workbook is going to introduce one of the prominent key theories to define wellbeing as a way to evaluate our current situation and allow us to move forward and tweak the areas that we are perhaps lacking in.

I personally find this exercise invaluable and it leads into so many options for improvement. Positive Psychology talks about interventions, which are activities that you can try that have been shown through research to help many people with a specific area of wellbeing. I will mention several in this workbook that you might like to try in the Top Tips sections.

I hope you enjoy the process of seeing where things are great in your life right now and where there is room to grow. Things often change over time and our priorities shift, so doing this exercise now, even if you feel generally happy with your wellbeing can be a valuable exercise to see if there are areas where you may wish to develop further.

x Clare



PERMA outlines five categories that are believed to help people lead, happy, fulfilled lives. Ideally, each of the five elements will be accounted for, so as I highlight each one, consider whether this is an area in your life that needs development.

P - Positive Emotions

This can be linked to happiness, feeling joy, satisfaction, having fun. What do you engage in that gives you some positive emotions? Perhaps something you do for fun, just for you.

E - Engagement

When we are fully immersed or engaged in an activity we are said to be in 'flow'. Everything is just flowing, happening as it should, seemingly without really having to think about it. This may happen for you in a sporting context, cooking, playing an instrument or something else.

R - Relationships

Humans are social beings, we need social interaction with friends, family and even colleagues. But ideally, we want these to be positive relationships. We have connections with many people, some will be more positive than others. Developing and maintaining positive relationships is important.

M - Meaning

Recognising that there is something greater than ourselves is seen to be beneficial to our wellbeing. Therefore engaging in activities that help connect us to greater causes, perhaps in the community or through a charity can be very beneficial. We need purpose and meaning in our lives, for many this is bringing up a family, for others, it is in their work.

A - Accomplishment

This is about having goal directed behaviour. What are you working towards to develop or grow? Accomplishment can be about doing something just for the sake of achieving it. You could choose to climb a mountain or learn the guitar for no other reason that it would be an accomplishment to achieve this.

On the next few pages we are going to explore and evaluate each of these areas.

Positive EMOTIONS

Start by giving yourself a score out of 10 for how happy you are with this area of your life?



List activities or things in your life that bring you positive emotions like joy, gratitude, interest, hope, pride, amusement, awe and love.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Note any activities or things that are bringing in negative emotions in your life. This is not to dwell on them, but so you can begin to think of a way round them.

Top Tip

Outlining positive things at the end of each day not only creates positive emotion in the moment but also programmes our mind to notice and appreciate more positives tomorrow. Try the 3 Good Things Exercise (p.8).

Think of one thing you are going to do differently to increase positive emotions in your life.
(Write it down here and commit to starting straight away)

Flow / ENGAGEMENT

Start by giving yourself a score out of 10 for how happy you are with this area of your life?



List activities or things in your life that put you in a state where you can lose time, where you are so engaged that you think of nothing else for a while. Ideally the activity will challenge you in some way - therefore TV watching, although a way to lose time, rarely induces flow.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Are there any skills / activities that you've been thinking about trying? Flow is created through challenging your skill level and sometimes with things we have done for years we relax into 'easy mode' and the challenge may not be there anymore. List some ideas of things you might like to learn. E.g, a new language, musical instrument, chess, a sport, etc...

Top Tip

Remember that flow can be achieved through socialising which can also strengthen relationships. It is also worth noting, in case you didn't list it, that work can create flow in many instances. Recognising the positives of work is important for our wellbeing too.

Think of one thing you are going to do differently to increase engagement / flow in your life.
(Write it down here and commit to starting straight away)

Positive RELATIONSHIPS

Start by giving yourself a score out of 10 for how happy you are with this area of your life?



List the top 5 most positive relationships in your life right now.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Are there any areas where you would like to have more positive relationships? Consider your work colleagues, family, friends and romantic relationships. Noting an area is lacking is the first step to changing it.

Top Tip

One of the main factors connected to positive relationships is how you respond to someone's good news. Make the choice to be excited, interested and involved in their success. Find a way to celebrate it even if you are busy. This works for work relationships as well as romantic ones.

Think of one thing you are going to do differently to increase a positive relationship in your life.
(Write it down here and commit to starting straight away)

MEANING

Start by giving yourself a score out of 10 for how happy you are with this area of your life?



What things in your life bring you meaning, give you a sense of purpose? There may be one main thing or several areas.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

If you feel lacking in this area or wish to expand your sense of purpose consider your 'why'. The 'what' is easier to list. But 'why' we do things will start to show a theme. Once you identify 'why' you do most things you can use this to bring meaning to other areas of your life too.

Top Tip

Can you find meaning in even the smallest, mundane tasks? Research shows that if we link tasks to our personal goals and values we can find meaning in them. This is where knowing what your 'why' is in life can be useful.

Think of one mundane task you dislike and describe how it could link to your 'why' to make it meaningful.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Start by giving yourself a score out of 10 for how happy you are with this area of your life?



Let's start by celebrating. List 5 things you have achieved in the last year that you are proud of.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Outline one goal you would like to work towards that you have not yet begun.

Outline potential obstacles to achieving this goal, or what is holding you back.

Top Tip

Challenging ourselves is very important for our wellbeing. Having something to work towards can give us purpose and great satisfaction when we reach our goal. But to avoid overwhelm make sure you break it down into smaller steps and celebrate each milestone - however small!

Think of one thing you are going to do differently to increase positive emotions in your life.

(Write it down here and commit to achieving this goal by a set date)

APPENDIX

Positive Psychology Interventions

3 Good Things Intervention

Seligman et al (2005) found that when people wrote down three good things from their day, every night before bed, they had increased levels of happiness. The key is to expand on why it was a good thing and the following questions help focus this activity:

1. What did you enjoy today?
2. What went well today?
3. What are you grateful for?

Geelong 3 Breath Exercise

Geelong Grammar School is based in Australia and they are one of the schools leading the way in promoting wellbeing across the whole school, with staff and students. This intervention is credited to them and I love the simplicity of it to change your physical and mental state. The idea is you take three deep breaths and on the exhale of each one you focus on the following:

1st Exhale: Notice your body and feel it relaxing as you exhale

2nd Exhale: Think about what you are grateful right here in this moment

3rd Exhale: Consciously think about the state you want to be in. E.g, confident, excited, curious

'Everything I do' Exercise

The aim with this exercise is to identify values and meaning in your day to day activities. Once we know this we can then apply this meaning to even menial tasks.

Everyday for a week complete this sentence:

'Almost everything I do is to _____ so that _____.'

For example: **'Almost everything I do is to feel energised and happy, so that I can support others to do the same.'**

You can change it everyday, if you keep this up for a month you will see some real variation but also themes starting to emerge. Once you are very clear on your purpose it is possible to see more meaning in everything we do.