

# Positive psychology

## 1. What makes people happy?

Rate the above on a scale of 0-10 (0= does not bring happiness at all; 10 = brings a great deal of happiness)

- a) Being on holiday
- b) Buying luxury items
- c) Individual personal achievement
- d) Work fulfilment
- e) A good level of income
- f) Thanking others
- g) Planning a holiday
- h) Pleasurable free time activities
- i) Recognising those things you are grateful for
- j) Belief in a cause that you are engaged in
- k) Noticing what is beautiful / uplifting in the natural environment
- l) Saving for something and then purchasing it

Positive psychology was developed by Martin Seligman (1980s - )

Predicated on the idea that we should focus not on what makes us unhappy, but what makes us happy.

He suggests that the alleviation of misery does not bring happiness, but rather only nothingness. It can only take you 'up to 0'.

Pleasure is the 'icing on the cake' - but only if engagement and/or meaning are already present

**Pillars of happiness**, according to Seligman:

Engagement with something – a cause, something you believe in

Gratitude – feeling and expressing it

'Flow' – immersion in activity that is absorbing

Connectedness – feeling part of a larger group

Giving and generosity

## Simple techniques to be happier

### **1. The Gratitude Diary:**

- a) Write down 5 things you feel grateful for. You can add why, if you wish.  
You can do this creatively, through images or another medium.  
It's possible to do this at any time of the day.
- b) Also express gratitude to others – benefits both the giver and the receiver.
- c) Gratitude letter

### **2. When thinking about the future, simply look up, rather than down**

### **3. Get into the habit of smiling as your 'default' facial expression!**

### **4. Practise visualising how you would like things to be**

- a) Make these detailed
- b) Engage your senses (how does it sound like / smell etc?)
- c) Imaging who else is affected by the positive changes you want for yourself