

POSITIVITY IN WORKPLACE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

by: Vik Kapoor

ROADMAP OF PRESENTATION

1. Roadmap & Housekeeping
2. Reflection Prompt
3. Positive Psychology Primer
4. Positive Conflict Management
5. Select Resources
6. Q & A

REFLECTION

Think of a time in your practice when positivity made or could have made a significant difference.

Please take a moment to jot it down.

PP PRIMER

Positive Psychology – the scientific study of happiness and well-being.

SETTING THE STAGE

(1) “Much will be gained if we transform your hysterical misery into common unhappiness.” – Sigmund Freud

**(3) “Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions.”
– Dalai Lama XIV**

(2) “Psychology is much bigger than just medicine, or fixing unhealthy things. It’s about education, work, marriage – it’s even about sports. What I want to do is see psychologists working to help people build strengths in all of these domains. – Martin Seligman

(4) “Happiness is the highest good and the end at which all our activities ultimately aim.” – Aristotle

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

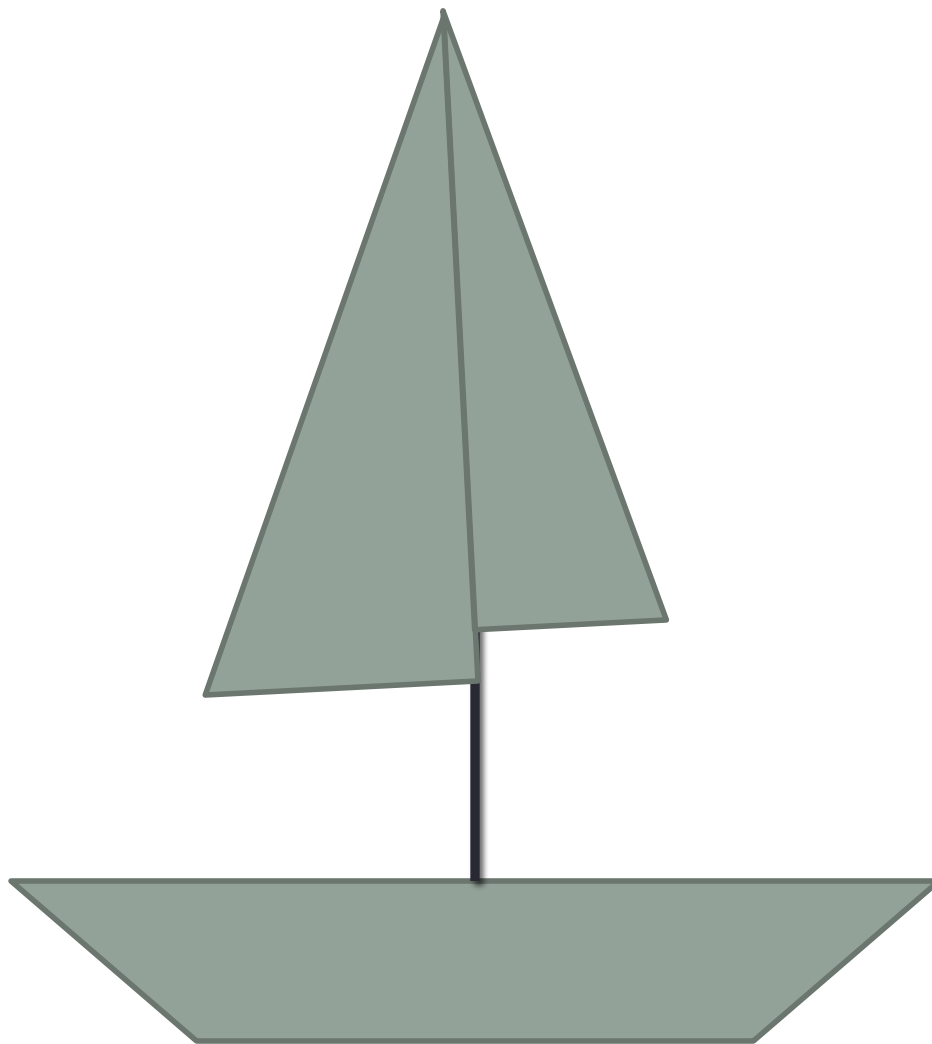
PERMA Model - well-being theory developed by Martin Seligman, which identifies key ingredients to flourishing in life.

- **Positive emotion**
- **Engagement**
- **Relationships**
- **Meaning**
- **Accomplishment/Achievement**

WELL-BEING AT WORK

- P – Recognize that your happiness is in your control!**
(Happiness Formula; Hedonic Treadmill).
- E – Find your Flow!** (Csikszentmihalyi) (pronounced chick-sent-me-high-ee).
- R – Catch people doing something right!** (One Minute Manager (Blanchard) / Profit from the Positive (Greenberg & Maymin)).
- M – Create space for HERO – Hope, Efficacy, Resilience & Optimism!** (Learned Optimism (Seligman); languaging).
- A – Identify signature strengths and use them in novel ways!**
(Rath) Strengthsfinder 2.0; Emotional Intelligence 2.0; Leadership 2.0; and Entrepreneurial Strengthsfinder 2.0.

POSITIVE to NEGATIVE RATIO



ACTIVE & CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION (Gable)

(1) Passive and Destructive

“I’m hungry – are you going to happy hour?”

(dismissive; uninterested)

(3) Active and Destructive

**“That sounds like a lot of work!
Are you sure you can handle it?”**

(furrowed brow; look of worry)

(2) Passive and Constructive

“That’s nice.”

(little to no emotion)

(4) Active and Constructive

“That’s‘ amazing news! I know how hard you worked for that. How did it come up? How happy are you right now!?”

(eye contact; genuine smiling)

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

FOR GROUPS

Positivity reverberates to three degrees of separation (Framingham Heart Study) and develops upward spirals of positive momentum in organizations (Frederickson).

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Mimicking a Duchenne smile increases happiness (Kraft and Pressman), as does singing and listening to music (so long as you intended to cheer up by doing so) (Horn).

THREE GOOD THINGS (Peterson)

One of the EASIEST and BEST “happiness interventions” anyone can engage in to improve positive mood in a short period of time.

Every day for 15 days, write down three things that happened well and that you are grateful for. Provide detail, including what you expected to happen, what happened, and what you are grateful for.

Savor those moments for greatest impact.

POSITIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Appreciative Facilitation (Cooperrider)

Affirmative Mediation (Barthel)

Positive Coaching (Biswas-Diener)

POSITIVITY AND ADR

There seems to be an inverse relationship between well-being and conflict.

There is support for the idea that a positive feedback loop exists between happiness and collaboration in the conflict resolution context.

Arthur Pearlstein, "Pursuit of Happiness and Resolution of Conflict: An Agenda for the Future of ADR," *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal* 12 (June 2012): 229-236.

HYPOTHESIS #1

You are serving as a mediator for an institutional client. Prior to the mediation, a party says the following to you in private:

- I do not want this mediation to blow up into a shouting match.
- I am worried that there will be a great deal of emotion.
- We seem to agree on 4 of the issues but the last 2 are very tense and I do not know if we will be able to resolve this today.

How can the principles of positivity help you? Please jot down some notes.

APPROACH and AVOIDANT GOALS

Avoidant – what you do not want to happen.

“My goal is to not be passed up for promotion next time.”

Approach – what you want to happen.

“My goal is to be promoted next time.”

Avoidant – I do not want an argument.

Approach – I want a healthy, civilized discussion.

COUNTERACTING COGNITIVE BIASES

Negative Attribution
Demonization
Reactive Devaluation
Loss Aversion
Micro-inequities
Avoidance/Victimization

Draw on Micro-Affirmations! (Rowe)

Explore Positive Imaging! (Peale)

Make Self-Talk Positive!

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Discover (in pairs)

Dream (in groups)

Design (on paper)

Deliver (loud & proud)

HYP0 #2

Your job is to facilitate a group discussion over the reorganization of several work units. Several competing “factions” have their own idea of a new organizational chart.

After some prodding you have convinced the parties to share their proposed organizational charts. The first group presents their chart and the members brace themselves for the anticipated flurry of criticism from competing groups.

How might the principle of appreciative inquiry help you move the ball?

POSITIVE QUESTIONING

What is going well so far?

I hear you saying that you want things to be better. What are some possibilities?

Imagine this issue was resolved in the middle of the night while you slept, but no one told you. How would you realize that this issue is gone? How would your day look different?

SUMMARY – APPLIED POSITIVITY

Appreciative Facilitation (Cooperrider)

Affirmative Mediation (Barthel)

Positive Coaching (Biswas-Diener)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Websites

Authentic Happiness ([includes self-assessments](#))

The Center for Positive Organizations

The International Positive Psychology Association (provides a wealth of information, including details on the recurring World Congress on Positive Psychology)

The Pursuit of Happiness Blog (provides an extensive database of empirical studies and summaries)

Books

Peterson, Christopher. *A Primer in Positive Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Seligman, Martin E. P. *Flourish: A Visionary Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Atria, 2011.

Greenberg, Margaret and Senia Maymin. *Profit from the Positive: Proven Leadership Strategies to Boost Productivity and Transform Your Business*. USA: McGraw Hill, 2013.

Bormans, Leo (ed.). *The World Book of Happiness: The Knowledge and Wisdom of One Hundred Happiness Professors From Around the World*. New York: Firefly Books, 2011.

Aneja, Sahil *Happiology: The Science of Creating Your Happiness*. USA: Outskirts Press, 2014.

QUESTIONS?