

# Positive Emotion

# Self-Coaching Guide

**PERMA** states that Positive Emotion contributes to our wellbeing. [See SCG – ‘How can I improve my wellbeing?’ for more about PERMA.] Positive emotions include feelings of pleasure, enjoyment, optimism, satisfaction, fulfilment, gratitude, love, peace, hope, curiosity and inspiration. Although these positive emotions make us feel happy, expecting to feel happy all the time is unrealistic.

Negative emotions narrow our focus so we can deal with an immediate problem, e.g. activate the fight, flight or freeze behaviours. They close us down and turn us inwards. In contrast, positive emotion makes us feel happy, improves our wellbeing, and causes us to thrive. When in a positive emotional state, we’re more likely to see problems/solutions more broadly and be more creative and flexible. As a result, this enhances our personal resources over time which affect four main aspects of our life:

- **Physical:** Improved strength, cardiovascular health, and ability to cope with illness
- **Intellectual:** Improved performance, persistence, problem-solving, and decision-making
- **Psychological:** Improved mental health, resilience, and optimism
- **Social:** Better and more friendships, other relationships, and social connections

## *How can I feel more positive?*

To gain the many benefits from experiencing positive emotions, we should connect with:

- **Friends** – Spend time with someone we can rely on to help us look at things more positively
- **Nature** – Go for short walks, look and listen to nature, and experience some sunshine
- **Music** – Listen to some energising music, and even sing and dance around the room to it
- **Memories** – Look at our favourite photos displayed on a wall or as a computer screensaver slideshow. Create a portfolio of objects and mementos that remind us of particular positive emotions
- **Others** – Perform random acts of kindness for others through our day, no matter how small
- **Ourselves** – Treat yourself to a special (half) day (out or in) which is purposeful as well as enjoyable
- **Humour** – Write down three funny things that happened during the day before going to sleep. Revisit these entries when we feel in need of a lift (similar to us keeping a **Daily Gratitude Diary**)

Create a list of all the activities that *you* have enjoyed doing in the past. Keep this list handy (and next to any task list you keep) and each day make sure you engage in some of these fun activities.

Obviously, it’s better to experience more positive emotions than negative ones. Positive emotions are usually short-lived; negative ones often live longer. Thus, the frequency of positive experiences is more important than their strength, so aim to experience regular small pleasures rather than a few big ones.

*“Positive emotions enhance your life. Negative emotions sabotage your life.” Dr T.P.Chia*

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## More Information

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