



B.C. Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association

MEMBER UPDATE

ReFresh

June 15, 2022



This week...

Diving Into the Summer with Optimism!

Last week, BCPVPA Executive Director Kevin Reimer closed our staff meeting with a fun game of 'This or That', where our colleagues try to predict how we will each answer questions with two options. The question posed to me was: "Rochelle: glass half empty, or glass half full?" Had that question been asked 10 years ago or more, I would have said half empty. However, I can now honestly answer half full, due to Positive Psychology.

What is Positive Psychology?

"Positive psychology is a scientific approach to studying human thoughts, feelings, and behavior, with a focus on strengths instead of weaknesses, building the good in life instead of repairing the bad, and taking the lives of average people up to *great* instead of focusing solely on moving those who are struggling up to *normal*" (Peterson, 2008).

Want to find out more? Here is an [animated 3.5 minute video](#) that explains the science. Or, you can check out a past article of [The Learning Brain on Positive Psychology](#).

Positive psychology helps people reprioritize the importance of positive experiences by acknowledging and being present in the moments you feel happiness, joy, inspiration, or love. People can use positive psychology to develop personality traits that enhance positivity, like gratitude, resilience, compassion, hope, and self-confidence.

These experiences and traits can be achieved by learning how to shift perspectives from negative framing to positive framing. It is hard to make such a shift without practice; start with incremental changes and use self-compassion along the way (that in itself is an act of positive change).

Try creating a daily list of three things you were grateful for that day. It can be hard at first, but start simple – a caring partner, a nice co-worker, or a phone call from a friend. This is a simple action that can give you a radically more positive outlook on life.

The Benefits of Positive Psychology

By starting small, you will experience cumulative change that can improve your mood, well-being and quality of life. When you start to notice these shifts, you can notice an enhanced life-experience because you will be:

- open to enjoying more positive emotions
- attuned to strengths and unique talents
- able to maintain positive relationships with others

Practicing Positive Psychology

In my own journey with positive psychology, the biggest lesson I learned was to be self-aware. By tuning in to how perspectives and thoughts impact how you feel, you can realize that your point of view may not be the most accurate interpretation of what is actually happening around you.

You will be amazed by how just ‘changing the story’ in your head can significantly impact how you feel and react to a situation. Looking for the positive and being open to an alternative narrative may take practice – but, with intent, you will find over time that this becomes more naturally integrated in your life.

Being intentional with ways to bring joy, calm, and optimism within your body and nervous system is an amazing investment in your well-being and can be life-changing.

Invest in yourself this summer by picking one or two of the following positive psychology practices. Refresh yourself with new behaviours from this January 2022 ReFresh: [Tiny Steps to Positive Change](#).

Need a place to start? This article will give you strategies to put positive psychology to practice.

Here are my own suggestions on practicing positive psychology.

Gratitude:

- Snap pictures of things you're grateful for, and take a few minutes daily to look through your virtual gratitude photo journal
- Write a thank you note
- Spend time in nature and appreciate its wonder and beauty
- Share the best part of your day around the dinner table
- Call a friend and let them know you are thinking of them
- Write something positive about your family and post it on the refrigerator
- Bring coffee and bagels for your coworkers or employees
- When you look in the mirror, instead of focusing on your flaws, say thank you to your body for all it does (Thank you, legs for carrying me all around town!).

Strengths and Capabilities: Studies by famous Psychologist Martin Seligman show that the happiest people are those that have identified and use their strengths in various areas of their lives. Therefore, I highly recommend the book *Strengths Based Leadership and StrengthsFinder 2.0* and [online assessment](#) of your natural talents – amazing for work application and to help with any relationships!

Visualize success: Paint a mental picture of yourself successfully completing your big work assignment or giving your presentation with confidence. Really tune in to all the details, from your voice and posture to your self-talk. Alternatively, visualize a desired state of mind, such as relaxation, contentment, or peace of mind. Create a visual image of yourself in this place or state of mind by imagining every detail and using all your senses. If you need help visualizing this, [try a guided meditation](#).

Self-compassion: When we fixate on and amplify our mistakes or flaws, we train ourselves to focus on the negatives. Self-compassion is the natural antidote for self-criticism. When we treat ourselves with kindness and grace, we are acknowledging our imperfections and loving ourselves anyway. People who practice self-compassion are less likely to suffer from depression, insomnia, and physical aches and pains.

Anticipate, savor, remember: There are three simple ways to increase the enjoyment of pleasurable experiences.

- **Anticipate.** Think about the excitement of a young child before their birthday or a vacation. Often, it is the anticipation that adds to the enjoyment. You can boost your happiness in the same way by spending time anticipating the joy an upcoming event or holiday will bring. View the preparation as part of the enjoyment rather than as a chore.
- **Savor.** Life is so rushed that it's easy to let things pass without fully engaging in them. The idea behind savoring an experience is to be fully present. So, when you are at your son's piano recital, avoid distractions like texting or thinking about your to-do list. Try to put everything else aside and just enjoy this moment in time.
- **Remember.** The final way to increase your pleasure is to look back and reflect on the good times. Most of us do this by looking at photos and retelling stories. You might also do it by making a scrapbook, keeping a journal, or even looking through your old calendars.

Summer's Comin'

Our souls need more positivity. Simple as that. Feed your soul with some positive psychology this summer and you will note a difference by September.

I heard Clint Black's song *Summer's Comin'* on the radio the other day. I love this song for his optimism as he looks forward to months of warmth and relaxation. Let's get started this summer with some positive, uplifting music:

- [Summer's Comin'](#) by Clint Black
- [Happy](#) by Pharrell Williams: check out this adorable video with dogs and a cat at the beach set to the song *Happy* – it will be sure to make you smile!
- [Walking on Sunshine](#) by Katrina and the Waves
- [Dancing in the Streets](#) by David Bowie and Mick Jagger
- [I'm Still Standing](#) by Elton John
- [Can't stop the feeling](#) by Justin Timberlake

All of us on the BCPVPA staff admire your commitment and the hard work you have dedicated to those you supported this past year: we want nothing more for you than a relaxing summer and a healthy focus on you and yours!



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If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.

Sources

Attuned Psychology | [5 Positive Psychology Strategies That You Can Implement Today Improve Overall Well-Being](#)

Positive Psychology | [What is Positive Psychology?](#)

Psychology Today | [What is Positive Psychology and What is it Not?](#)

