

Worksheet 3:

The PERMA Model

(Seligman, M. (2011) *Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being - and How To Achieve Them*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing).

Martin Seligman presented the PERMA Model in his 2011 book, *Flourish*. He described well-being as having 'a good life' and being happy.

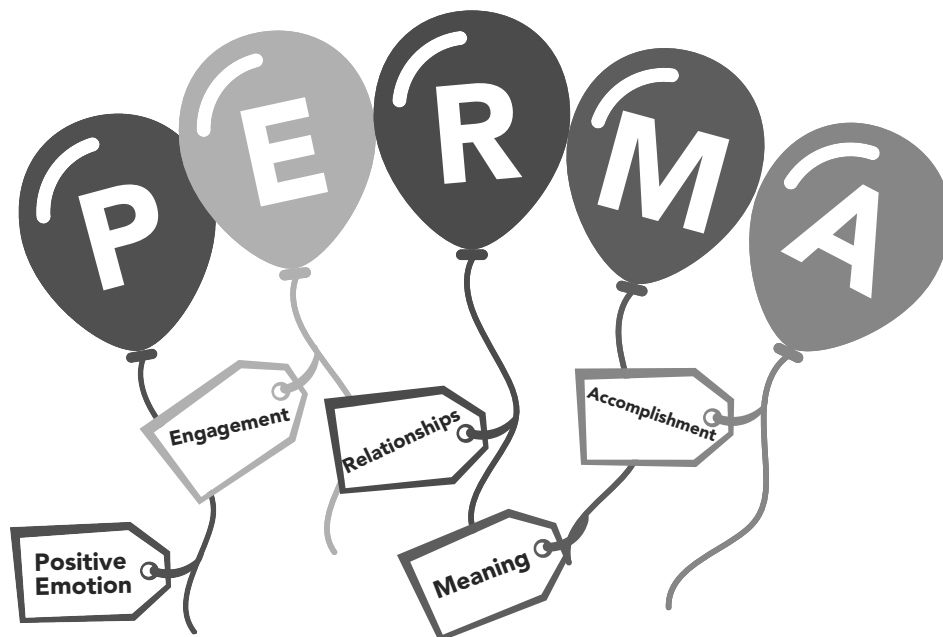
Happiness is a difficult concept to quantify. It's clearly something that many of us spend a lifetime searching for. It encompasses the principles of Positive Psychology.

Positive Psychology, the science and study of life's positive qualities (well-being, happiness, satisfaction, and the ability to thrive in our day-to-day lives). The field studies what goes into building a life of purpose, rich with meaning that allows the individual to flourish first. It was developed in 1998 by Martin E.P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

It suggests that happiness is a natural process and easily achievable. It is the natural result of achieving the things that bring a sense of well-being combined with having satisfaction with life.

Professor Martin Seligman spent many years developing a theory of happiness. He wanted to identify the building blocks of well-being. He drew up a model of well-being called the PERMA model.

These are the five elements Seligman believes are essential to human well-being:



Seligman suggests that each of these elements is essential to our well-being and satisfaction with life. Together, they form the solid foundation upon which we can build a happy and flourishing life.

Positive emotion

When someone asks you whether you are satisfied with your life, you may answer that it depends heavily on your mood. When you are feeling positive, you can look back on the past with gladness; look into the future with hope; and enjoy and cherish the present.

Engagement

We don't thrive when we are doing nothing. We get bored and feel useless. But when we engage with the world around us, we become absorbed. We gain momentum and focus, and we can enter the state of being known as 'flow'. In Positive Psychology, 'flow' describes a state of utter, blissful immersion in the present moment.

Relationships

Humans are social animals. We have a need for connection, love, physical and emotional contact with others. We enhance our own well-being by building strong networks of relationships around us, with family, friends, co-workers, neighbours and all the other people in our lives.

Meaning

We are at our best when we dedicate our time to something greater than ourselves. This could be religious faith, community work, family, a political cause, a charity, a professional or creative goal.

Many studies have shown that people who belong to a community and pursue shared goals are happier than people who don't (Bolger N, Zuckerman A, Kessler RC (2002) Invisible support and adjustment to stress. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 79, No. 6, 953-961).

It is also very important to feel that the work we do is consistent with our personal values and beliefs. From day-to-day, if we believe our work is worthwhile, we feel a general sense of well-being and confidence that we are using our time and our abilities for good.

Accomplishment

We have all been taught that 'winning isn't everything'. Yes, we should strive for success, but it's more important to enjoy the game. However, people need to win sometimes.

What use are goals and ambitions if we never reach them? To achieve well-being and happiness, we must look back on our lives with a sense of accomplishment: 'I did it, and I did it well'.