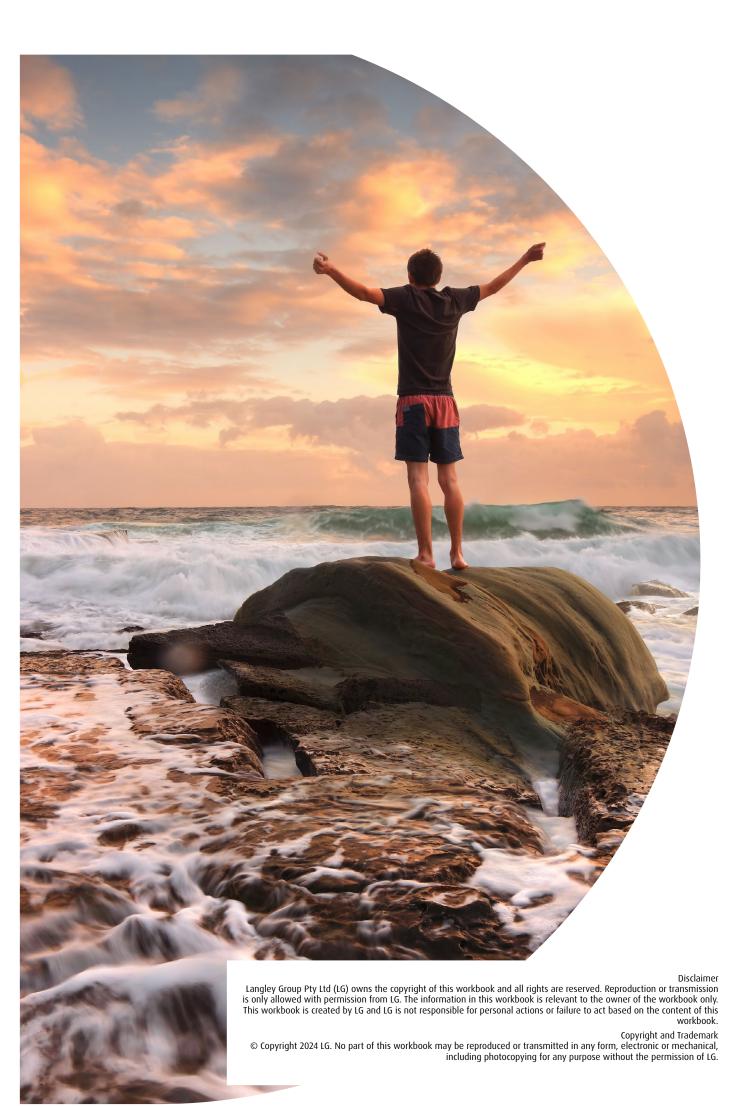
WELLBEING ACTIVITY RESOURCE KIT



USING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND NEUROSCIENCE TO ENABLE INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATION-WIDE WELLBEING







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INTRODUCTION

Your smorgasbord of activities for putting positive psychology into practice begins here.

There are many ways to apply positive psychology to improve happiness and wellbeing in yourself and others. We need a variety of techniques for a variety of people and a variety of situations. This is a starting point. There are many more activities you may want to explore.

The activities in this toolkit are created by positive psychology researchers and practitioners all over the world. They were put together by Work on Wellbeing, who help provide resources for our students. We teach these and more in our courses to help individuals, workplaces and communities flourish.

YOU WILL FIND SIX ACTIVITIES ON:

- Gratitude
- 2. Optimism
- 3. Mindset
- 4. Mindfulness
- 5. Kindness
- 6. Relationships.



Positive psychology doesn't prescribe a set level of happiness or expect you to be happy all the time. Life is complex, and we all experience negative emotions and events. Positive psychology offers ways to increase positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment so people can live a more satisfying, fulfilling life.

One of the best ways to do this is to increase the duration and intensity of our 'ups' and reduce the duration and intensity of our 'downs'. These activities are designed to help you do just that and to inspire positive habits you can adopt and share with people in any area of life.

Use yourself as a scientific experiment. Test them on yourself; notice what helps you and what works. Let us know how you are putting positive psychology into practice.





Research

This exercise is also known as 'count your blessings'. Gratitude is strongly associated with higher wellbeing. The science indicates it is possible to become more grateful and strengthen the character trait of gratitude.

When people were asked to list things they are grateful for on a daily basis, they listed things such as:

- Fresh strawberries
- Going to the beach
- Watching live sport
- Singing in the shower
- Clean sheets
- Receiving a letter
- The smell of fresh bread
- Looking at old pictures
- A new pair of socks
- A big mug of hot cocoa
- Campfires

- Sitting in the sunshine
- Laying in a hammock
- Having a laugh with friends
- Finding a \$5 note in an old jeans pocket
- Waking up before the alarm goes off
- Having a warm bath
- Sitting in front of a fire on a cold day
- A good book
- When someone laughs at your jokes

- A whole day with nothing to do
- Spending time in nature
- Backyard sport
- Watching kids play
- Sleeping in
- Bushwalking
- Music
- A cup of tea

Advice

A good time to complete this exercise is just before going to bed. You can also do it during breaks when reading or watching evening TV. Implementing a reminder strategy, such as setting a regular alarm or leaving a journal next to your bed, will help you remember to complete this activity.

Also, think about if this activity will benefit you on an ongoing basis by completing it every day or once a week. Find a schedule that suits you.

Three Good Things activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase gratitude by focusing on good things that happen each day.

Instructions

TASK #1 - Cultivating Gratitude

Your task is to take some regular time each day to think of three things you are grateful for. These can be big things such as good health, supportive relationships and career successes, or little things such as a perfect cup of coffee or hearing your favourite song on the radio.

Write down three things at the end of each day for a week. Try to write new items each time. The aim is for you to take the time to be thankful for aspects of your life that may go unnoticed. Here is an example:

MONDAY

Today I am / was grateful for:

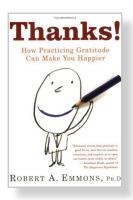
- A surprise call from Maria she is such a treasured friend
- That strategy meeting at work was a success I received some great feedback on my project
- The smell of cut grass after mowing the lawn

TASK #2 - Thanking Others

Once you are taking more notice of what you are grateful for, start also appreciating who you are grateful for in your relationships. For example, take time out of your day to say thanks to the person who may often be unappreciated. Go out of your way to thank a friend, partner, family member or work colleague for things and behaviours that have become routine or expected. Be specific when thanking people, so instead of saying "thanks", clearly outline how they have helped you or others. For example, "Thank you for helping me out by picking up my children from school. You really made my busy day easier, and I am really grateful."

MONDAY Today I am / was grateful for:
THECDAY
TUESDAY Today I am / was grateful for:
WEDNESDAY
Today I am / was grateful for:
THURSDAY
Today I am / was grateful for:
FRIDAY
Today I am / was grateful for:

SATURDAY Today I am / was grateful for:
SUNDAY
Today I am / was grateful for:
REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS



More resources

THANKS! HOW THE NEW SCIENCE OF GRATITUDE CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER

by Robert Emmons

Robert Emmons examines what it means to think and feel gratefully and invites readers to learn how to put this powerful emotion into practice.



THE SCRIBBLYBARK TREE AND THE DRAGON

by Janne Hardy and Sue Langley

An illustrated fable to engage children and adults in appreciating, sharing and amplifying positive experiences. Includes the Three Good Things activity.



INSPIRE ACTION JOURNAL

by Sue Langley

Recording your grateful thoughts in a journal will help you to improve positivity and enhance your levels of flourishing. Comes with an optional set of Inspire Action Cards to facilitate reflection and learning.





Research

The Best Possible Self exercise can increase optimism. This exercise requires people to envision themselves in an imaginary future in which everything has turned out in the most optimal way. Over the past years, writing about and imagining a best possible self has repeatedly been demonstrated to increase people's mood and wellbeing. Studies have shown it can increase optimism in terms of expecting favourable outcomes, an effect that was independent from the mood that was simultaneously increased by the exercise.

Advice

While in most cases, the exercise is used in a written form, it is also possible to draw your best possible self. One of the most powerful ways is to visualise your best possible self on a daily basis. To most people, writing down their fears and troubles has therapeutic results. This exercise takes a more positive approach toward oneself.

Researchers warn that this exercise may backfire if done incorrectly. Some people may compare their current self to their ideal self, causing feelings of disappointment due to the large gaps. To avoid these negative results, or if you find this happening, write about a realistic possible future self.

Further reading

King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 27(7), 798-807.

Meevissen, Y. M., Peters, M. L., & Alberts, H. J. (2011). Become more optimistic by imagining a best possible self: Effects of a two week intervention. Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry, 42(3), 371-378.

Peters, L. M., Flink, I. K., Boersma, K., & Linton, S. J. (2010). Manipulating optimism: can imagining a best possible self be used to increase positive future expectancies? The Journal of Positive Psychology, 5(3), 204-211.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase optimism in terms of expecting favourable outcomes for yourself.

Instructions

TASK #1 - Imagining your best possible self

Set a timer or stopwatch for 10 minutes. In this time, think about your best possible future self and write it down. Imaging your life the way you always imagined it would be like, your best possible self. Picture that you have performed to the best of your abilities and you have achieved the things you wanted in life. While writing, don't worry about grammar or punctuation; focus on writing all your thoughts and emotions in an expressive way. Describe what this future would look like for you.	
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TASK #2 - Reflecting on your best possible self

After completing the exercise, reflect on your feelings and your answer. Think about the following questions:

- What effects did this exercise have?
- Does this exercise affect you more emotionally, or does it affect your current self-image?
- Did it motivate or inspire you?
- Does it make you want to make changes?

• How did this exercise impact you overall?

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Best Possible Self activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.





Research

Most people don't have either a Growth or Fixed Mindset, rather a bit of both. The good news is that with practice, it's possible to cultivate more of a Growth Mindset. New research on mindsets indicates that Growth Mindsets are related to all kinds of successful outcomes, from academic grades to work performance.

Research is also showing that many of the attributes we used to consider fixed, such as personality and strengths of character, are less static and more able to change and be developed over time.

Advice

This skill takes a lot of time to master, so persist and be patient.

Growth Mindset activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to encourage you to think more deeply about what drives your success.

Instructions

TASK #1 - Understanding Growth

Understand the difference between Fixed and Growth Mindsets. Mindsets are beliefs about yourself and your most basic qualities, such as your intelligence, talents or personality.

- People with Fixed Mindset believe their basic qualities are fixed traits that don't and can't change
- People with Growth Mindset believe that their basic qualities can be cultivated and developed across their lifespan through dedicated effort

One of the keys to success isn't having greater amounts of innate intelligence, talent or ability; it's whether you look at these qualities as things that can be developed. Accept that having intelligence or talent is simply a starting point and that people accomplish great things through years of passionate practice, learning and effort.

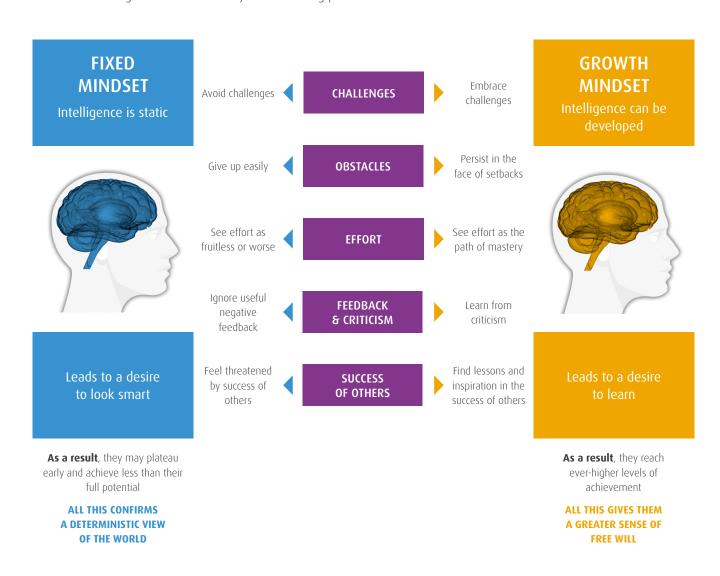
TASK #2 - Reinforcing Growth

Now work on developing a Growth Mindset. Over the coming week, practice cultivating a Growth Mindset in others with a particular kind of praise: for the process they applied rather than the person.

- Process-oriented praise, such as "you put in a lot of effort" or "that was a good strategy you chose", emphasises that achievement comes from striving and use of effective strategies. It allows others to interpret setbacks in terms of lack of effort or inappropriate strategies
- Person-oriented praise, such as "you're so smart", emphasises innate talents and abilities. It assumes that success is due to personal attributes and teaches others to interpret difficulties in terms of their personal weaknesses

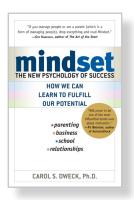
The two mindsets

- 1. In a **fixed mindset**, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits
- 2. In a **growth mindset**, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work intelligence and talent are just the starting point



© Carol Dweck

REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS



More resources

MINDSET: THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

by Carol Dweck

Carol Dweck, in decades of research on achievement and success, has discovered a truly groundbreaking idea - the power of our mindset. She explains why it's not just our abilities and talent that bring us success; it's whether we approach them with a fixed or growth mindset.





MINDFULNESS

Research

The benefits of mindfulness are overwhelming. With regard to wellbeing, being mindful makes it easier to savour the pleasures in life as they occur, helps you become fully engaged in activities, and creates a greater capacity to deal with adverse events. Many people who practice mindfulness report that they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past, are less preoccupied with concerns about success and self-esteem, and are better able to form deep connections with others. There are also numerous physical health benefits, such as reduced stress, lower blood pressure, improved sleep, less chronic pain and better heart health.

Advice

There are many specific mindfulness programmes out there, from books to websites to apps. Here are some of our favourite mindfulness apps to help you practice day to day.

BUDDHIFY

SMILING MIND

HEADSPACE

Mindfulness activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

5 MINUTES OF MINDFULNESS

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to become more mindful.

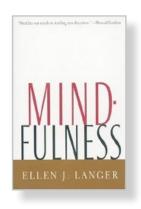
Instructions

Mindfulness is defined as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally". Your task is to practice five minutes of mindfulness every day for the coming week. Ideally, you would align this mindfulness practice with an activity you do every day, such as eating a meal or walking to work.

Let's give it a go now by being mindful of your breathing.

- Sit with your spine aligned in a comfortable yet alert posture, with your legs and arms uncrossed and your feet on the floor
- Gently let your eyes rest on a single point in front of you
- Take a couple of deep breaths, and, as you exhale, settle into your body, relaxing obvious tension
- Bring your attention to your whole body, sensing for a short while how your body
 presents itself to you right now. There is no particular way to be: simply notice how
 you are at this moment
- Now, bring your attention to your breathing. There is no right or wrong way to
 breathe while doing mindfulness practice. The key is to simply notice how it actually
 is right now. Notice where in your body you feel the breath most clearly. This may
 be your abdomen rising and falling, your chest expanding and contracting, or the
 sensation of air passing through your nostrils or mouth. Let your attention rest with
 your breathing
- Whenever your mind wanders away from your breathing to other thoughts or feelings, observe where it has gone, and then, without criticism or judgment, gently guide it back to your breath. There is no need to analyse or stop these thoughts from arising, in fact, this can increase their impact. Instead, accept them and let thoughts come and go as they need to. You may have to gently shift your attention back to your breath once or 100 times - simply repeat the process as often as needed
- After practicing for the allotted time, gently expand your awareness from your breath to your whole body. Take a minute before moving onto your next activity for the day

MINDFULNESS

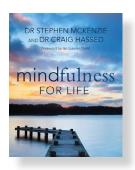


More resources

MINDFULNESS

by Ellen Langer

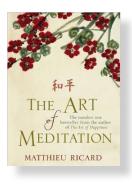
Langer explains how the mindless—as opposed to the mindful—develop mindsets and habits of thought that lead to errors and how mindfulness allows free rein to intuition, creativity and new perspectives.



MINDFULNESS FOR LIFE

by Dr Craig Hassed & Dr Stephen McKenzie

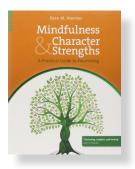
This practical and accessible manual shows how to apply mindfulness techniques to your life whether you need help with health and wellbeing, personal development or spiritual growth.



THE ART OF MEDITATION

by Matthieu Ricard

Wherever he goes, Buddhist monk Matthieu Ricard is asked to explain what meditation is, how it is done and what it can achieve. In this authoritative and inspiring book, he sets out to answer these questions.



MINDFULNESS AND CHARACTER STRENGTHS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FLOURISHING

by Ryan Niemeic

Curious about how character strengths can supercharge your mindfulness practice? Or how mindfulness can help you deploy your best qualities? Look no further!





RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Research

Deliberately practicing kindness and becoming more aware of your own kind behaviour toward other people can positively impact wellbeing. One study by Sonja Lyubomirsky and her colleagues tested the impact of kindness on wellbeing.

They asked students to perform five random acts of kindness per week over the course of six weeks.

These kind acts were described as behaviours that benefit others or make others happy, typically at some cost to themselves (e.g., cook a meal for someone, donate blood, buy coffee for a colleague, help someone with gardening, or offer your seat to an elderly, disabled or pregnant person). Students in the control group did not receive any kindness instructions.

Those who did practice kindness experienced an increase in happiness.

Advice

Kindness can involve both small and big gestures, from letting a car get in front in traffic to helping a friend move house. People also vary with regard to the kind acts they are amenable to giving and receiving. Do kind acts you are comfortable with and enjoy.

Researchers have found that the frequency of kind acts does not impact happiness; variety does. People who don't vary kind acts actually show a decrease in happiness over time. The kind act eventually receives less thanks and may even seem like a duty, chore or box-ticking exercise. A creative approach to kindness is far more sustaining and keeps things fresh and interesting.

Random Acts of Kindness activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted with additional information by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase wellbeing by performing acts of kindness.

Instructions

Small acts of kindness can brighten another's day. They also brighten yours. Kind actions give us stories to tell to help us and others savour happy times. They also improve our self-image.

Every week, commit to making five random acts of kindness during the week. They can be large or small, it is your choice.

Be open to the unexpected. Capitalise on the urge to do good in the moment. Going out of your way to help a stranger who has lost their keys may only take a few moments of your time; to the other person, it could make the difference between feeling alone and on the verge of tears to feeling supported and energised. These random acts can be contagious.

Use the templates on the next pages to keep track.

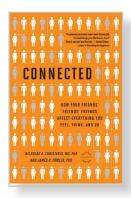
ACTIONS - RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

This week I helped others	by:		
ACT OF KINDNESS #1			
ACT OF KINDNESS #2			
ACT OF KINDNESS #3			
ACT OF KINDNESS #4			
ACT OF KINDNESS #5			

INTENTIONS - RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Next week I intend to help others by:
ACT OF KINDNESS #1
ACT OF KINDNESS #2
ACT OF KINDNESS #3
ACT OF KINDNESS #4
ACT OF KINDNESS #5

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS



More resources

CONNECTED: THE SURPRISING POWER OF OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS AND HOW THEY SHAPE OUR LIVES

by Nicholas Christakis & James Fowler

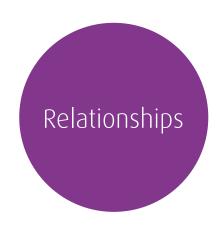
Renowned scientists Christakis and Fowler present compelling evidence for our profound influence on one another as they explain how social networks form, how they operate and how emotions and behaviours spread like a contagion.

Further reading

Lyubomirsky, S., Tkach, C., & Sheldon, K. M. (2004). Pursuing sustained happiness through random acts of kindness and counting one's blessings: Tests of two six-week interventions. Unpublished data, Department of Psychology, University of California, Riverside.

Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention. Journal of Happiness Studies, 7(3), 361-375.





Research

The manner in which we respond when others share triumphs directly builds or undermines relationships. Research into couples and intimate relationships suggests that supporting a partner when good things occur is as important in building a relationship as supporting them when bad things happen.

Research suggests that using Active Constructive Responding is a good way to convey understanding, validation and caring. It can increase the wellbeing of your existing friends and teammates, as well as help you make new connections and encourage closer, more trusting relationships.

What this technique, which was observed and codified by Shelly Gable, highlights is that giving enthusiastic and attentive feedback is very important in building positive relationships.

Advice

Humans like talking about themselves, and this makes up about 40% of communication. A large part of this dialogue is also about good news. Make a mental note to be on the lookout for people's good news and use their good fortune to build stronger bonds.

Active Constructive Responding activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted with additional information by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase relationship bonds and improve the quality of your relationships through positive communication.

Instructions

TASK #1 - Consider your relationships

Think about these questions:

- What 'positive relationships' do you currently have and with whom? Think about people in your personal and work life
- What do you need to do to care for these relationships on an ongoing basis?
- Who are the 'positive energisers' in your life and how do they have that effect on you?
- Which relationships do you need to consciously work on to improve?

What small actions can improve your relationships?

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TASK #2 - Use Active Constructive Responding

Use the Active Constructive Responding technique wherever appropriate over the coming weeks. An active constructive response is essentially responding to other's good news with enthusiasm, energy and engagement.

	CONSTRUCTIVE	DESTRUCTIVE
ACTIVE	Display enthusiasm, excitement, ask interested questions, reinforce positives, keep the conversation going, eye contact, smiling "That must feel fantastic" "What happened next?" "What is your plan?" "How are you going to celebrate?" "I will make sure there is an announcement"	Talk about the negative, devils advocate, find a problem, frown, look worried "I can't wait to see them argue over that!" "I have no idea where we are going to find the resources for that!" "That's a lot extra to be taking on" "I bet (someone else) will be upset"
PASSIVE	Smile, acknowledge, reassure, silence, no expression "That's great"	Disinterest, diversion, avoidance, no expression, little eye contact, turning away "Did you finish (something else)?" "I had a call from (someone unrelated)"

There are four ways of responding to people. Active Constructive Responding has been shown to build relationships best.

An active, constructive response is not about overdoing praise and positive feedback, as that can make people feel uncomfortable or patronised. We can concentrate on asking questions which encourage the person to talk about their good news and savour their positive emotions.

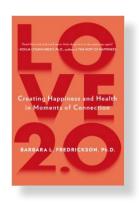
EXAMPLE

Suppose that a very good friend gets a promotion at work. Potential responding could be:

- Active Constructive Response: "That is really great. I am so proud of you. I know how important that promotion was to you. How do you want to celebrate?"
- Active Destructive Response: "That sounds like a lot of responsibility to take on. There will probably be more stress involved in the new position and potentially longer hours at the office"
- Passive Constructive Response: "That's good news"
- Passive Destructive Response: "What are we doing Friday night?"

Your task is to carefully listen to people you care about. When they report good events to you, respond actively and constructively to the good news reported.

REFLECTION AND LEARNINGS



More resources

LOVE 2.0: FINDING HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN MOMENTS OF CONNECTION

by Barbara Fredrickson

We all know love matters. In this groundbreaking book positive emotions expert Barbara Fredrickson shows us how much. Even more than happiness and optimism, love holds the key to improving our mental and physical health as well as lengthening our lives.



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE ACROSS THE WORLD

edited by Sue Roffey

Relationships are part of everyone's experience and their quality makes all the difference to our self-esteem, resilience and wellbeing. This book looks at the latest research and approaches to building positive relationships. Chapter on Positive Relationships at Work by Sue Langley.

Further reading

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. Journal of personality and social psychology, 87(2), 228.





ABOUT LANGLEY GROUP INSTITUTE

At The Langley Group Institute, we're dedicated to transforming lives with positive psychology and wellbeing science.

As an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO #40655), we offer government-accredited courses that blend learning with application. Our courses translate the latest science into actionable strategies you can immediately apply to your personal and professional life.

Our students join a community of like-minded people on a journey to better themselves and the people around them. You'll learn from an inspiring team of experts who help you get the most out of your experience, whether you're learning face-to-face or online.

The best part of our courses lies in their impact. As you enhance your own wellbeing, you'll also gain the tools to influence those around you and create a ripple effect of positive change and transformation.

OUR COURSES

Become the architect of your wellbeing with our Certificate IV in Wellbeing Science.

Ignite personal growth and fuel positive change with our Diploma of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing.





Find	out	more	about	our	courses;	
click here:						

BOOK A CALL

Or, if you're ready for a positive step forward, click here:

ENROL NOW



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