

Authentic Happiness & Human Flourishing

St. Mark's Cathedral

September 23, 2015

Awakening JOY



Overview of Course

- Week 1 Authentic Happiness, Positive Emotions and Flow
- Week 2 Human Flourishing (a new theory)
- Week 3 Dealing with the “Downside” (vulnerability and shame)—True Self/False Self
- Week 4 Putting It All Together



Brief Review—Week 1

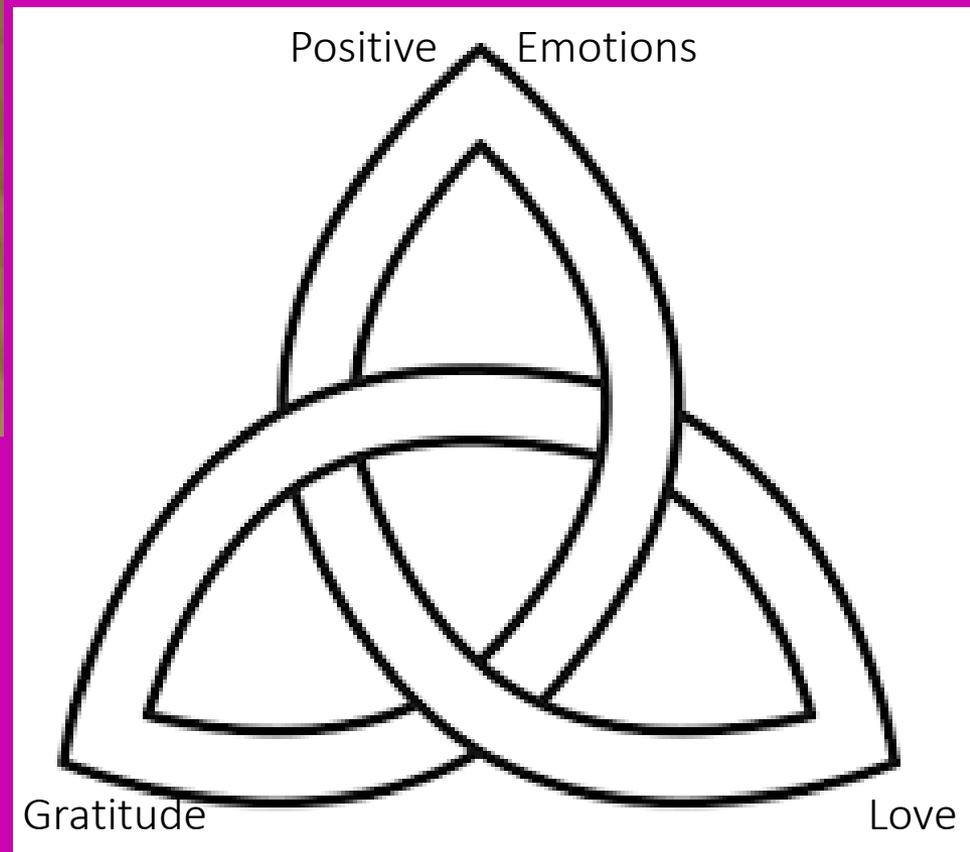


Thesis for Week I

Authentic happiness comes from identifying and cultivating your most fundamental strengths and using them every day in work, love, play and parenting.



Positive Psychology



Money



Clarification from last week... (Seligman, Auth. Happ., pg. 52ff)

Sophie Tucker: “I’ve been rich, and I’ve been poor. Rich is better.”

Results: “National purchasing power and average life satisfaction go strongly in same direction. Once the gross national product exceeds ~\$8000 per person the correlation disappears and added wealth brings no further life satisfaction (pg. 53)”

“How important money is to you influences your happiness. Materialism is counter-productive: at all levels of real income, people who value money more than other goals are less satisfied with their income and this lives as a whole...”

Living in the Present (Flow)

Savoring the Pleasures and Gratifying Experiences of Life

- Basking (receiving praise and congratulations)
- Thanksgiving (expressing gratitude for blessings)
- Marveling (losing the self in the wonder of the moment)
- Luxuriating (indulging the senses)

Worship is about Savoring the Present (Praise, Glory, Doxology, Communion)

The Happiness Formula $H=S+C+V$

H – your Enduring Level of Happiness (not momentary)

S – your Set Range (inheritance)

C – the circumstances of your life

V – factors under your voluntary control



Moving the Needle



V – variables under your voluntary control can lastingly help you live in the upper part of your set range of happiness

1. look for the positive emotions that you feel about the past.

***N.B. Use your intellect to let go of an ideology that your past determines your future*

2. Release the negative emotions (esp anger)

3. Voluntarily change your memories

4. Increase your gratitude about the good things in your past

5. Learn how to forgive past wrongs.

Well-Being (Eudaimonia)

- Aristotle thought all human action was to achieve happiness
- Nietzsche thought all human action was to get power.
- Freud thought all human action was to avoid anxiety.

- All three are monisms—they are too simplistic.

- Seligman has concluded that “authentic happiness” model is also too simplistic
 - More than just being cheerful about life
 - Not just about life satisfaction (which is primarily mood based)
 - Not exhaustive of other motivations (success, glory, etc.)

Declaration of Independence

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Why should we measure flourishing?

If we only measure GDP we have no idea how society is functioning/feeling as a whole

If we only measure mental illness we'll never know about flourishing

Single item measures of Life Satisfaction miss so much detail on wellbeing

Guide public policy for targeted intervention

Allow changes in wellbeing to be tracked over time

Allows for international comparisons

Five Elements of Well-Being (PERMA)

1. Positive Emotion
2. Engagement (living in the present)
3. Positive Relationships
4. Meaning
5. Accomplishment



Each element

- must contribute to well-being
- be pursued for its own sake, not as a means
- be distinctive, exclusive from the others



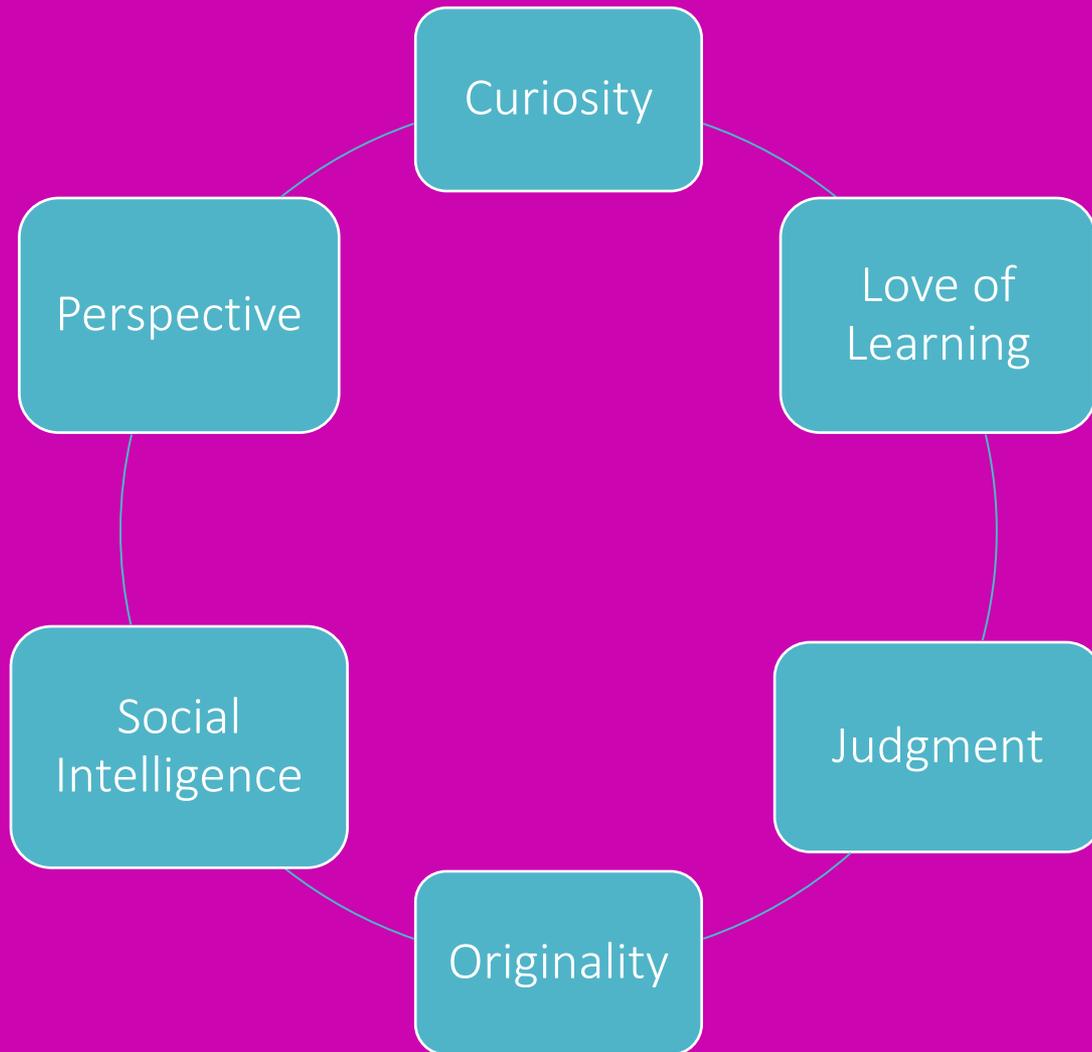


Accomplishment

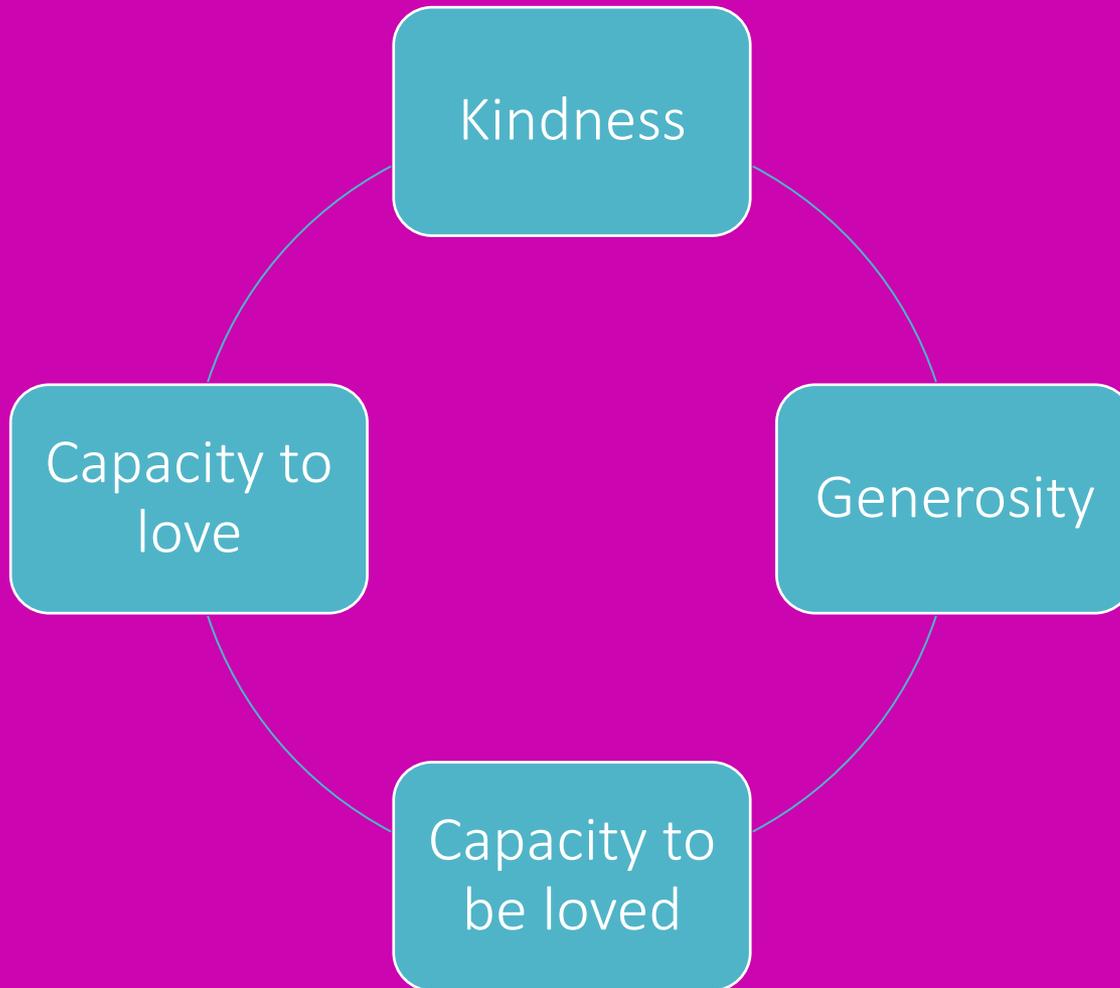
Positive versus Negative

- Therapeutic Model is built upon negative analysis (DSM)
- Positive Psychology is revolutionary in its focus on the positive
 - 24 strengths available to us
 - Six core virtues that find expression in the strengths
 1. Wisdom and knowledge
 2. Courage
 3. Love and humanity
 4. Justice
 5. Temperance
 6. Spirituality & Transcendence

Wisdom and Knowledge



Love and Humanity

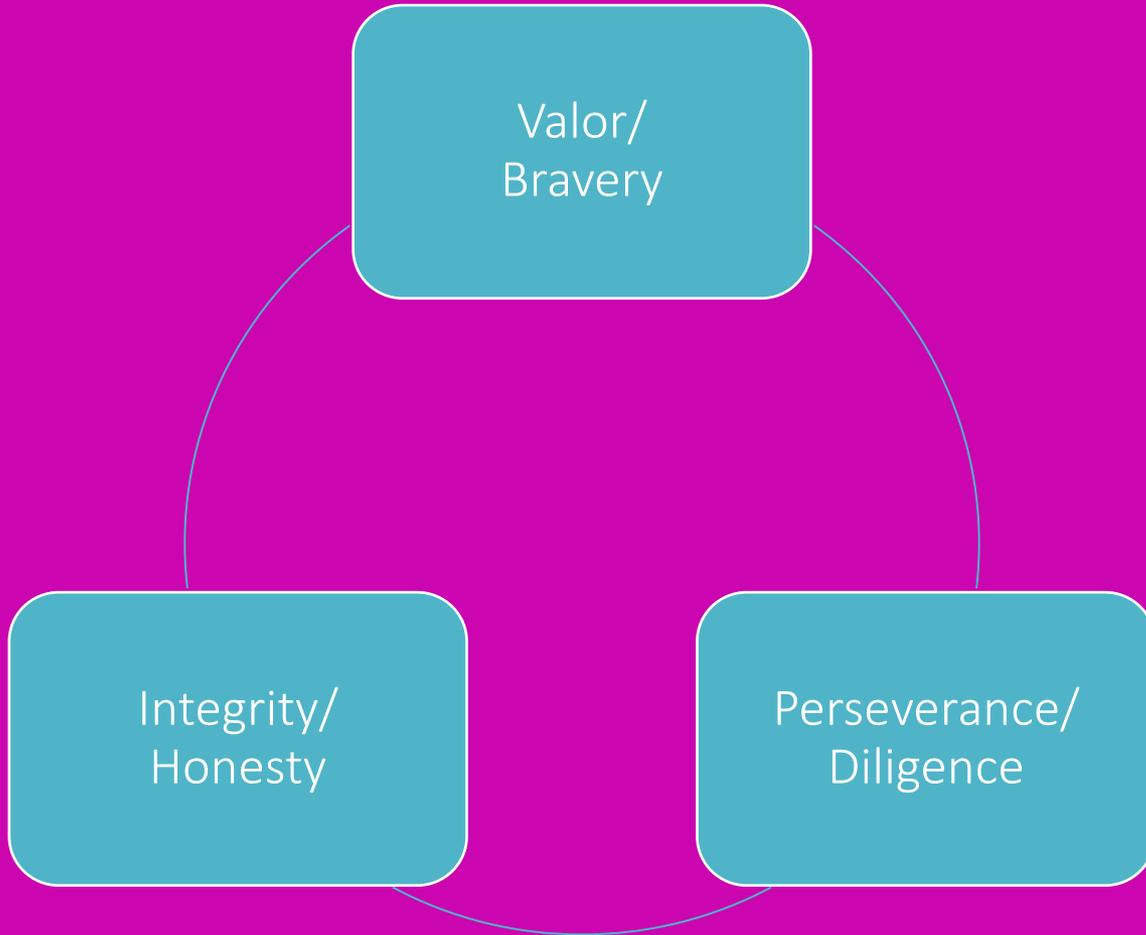


Courage

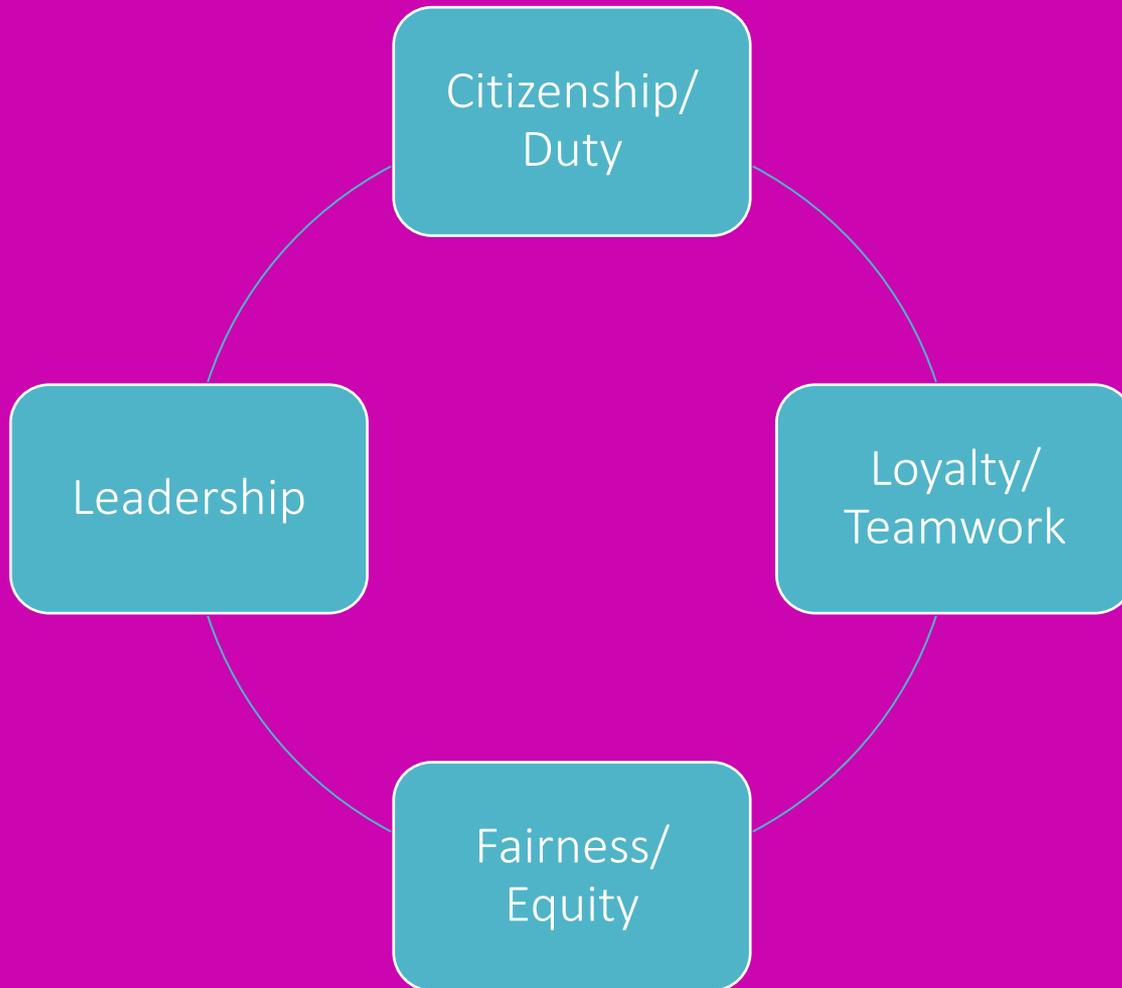
Valor/
Bravery

Integrity/
Honesty

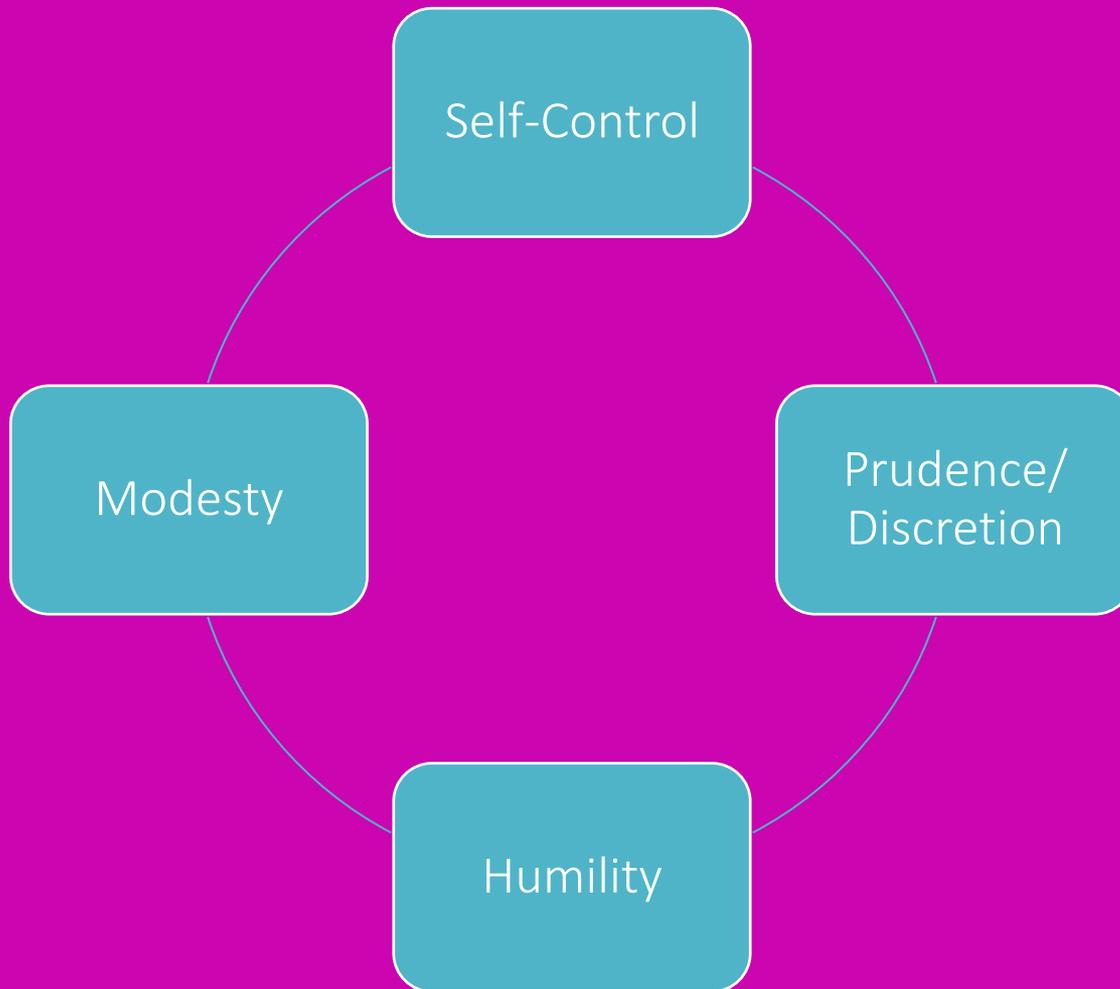
Perseverance/
Diligence



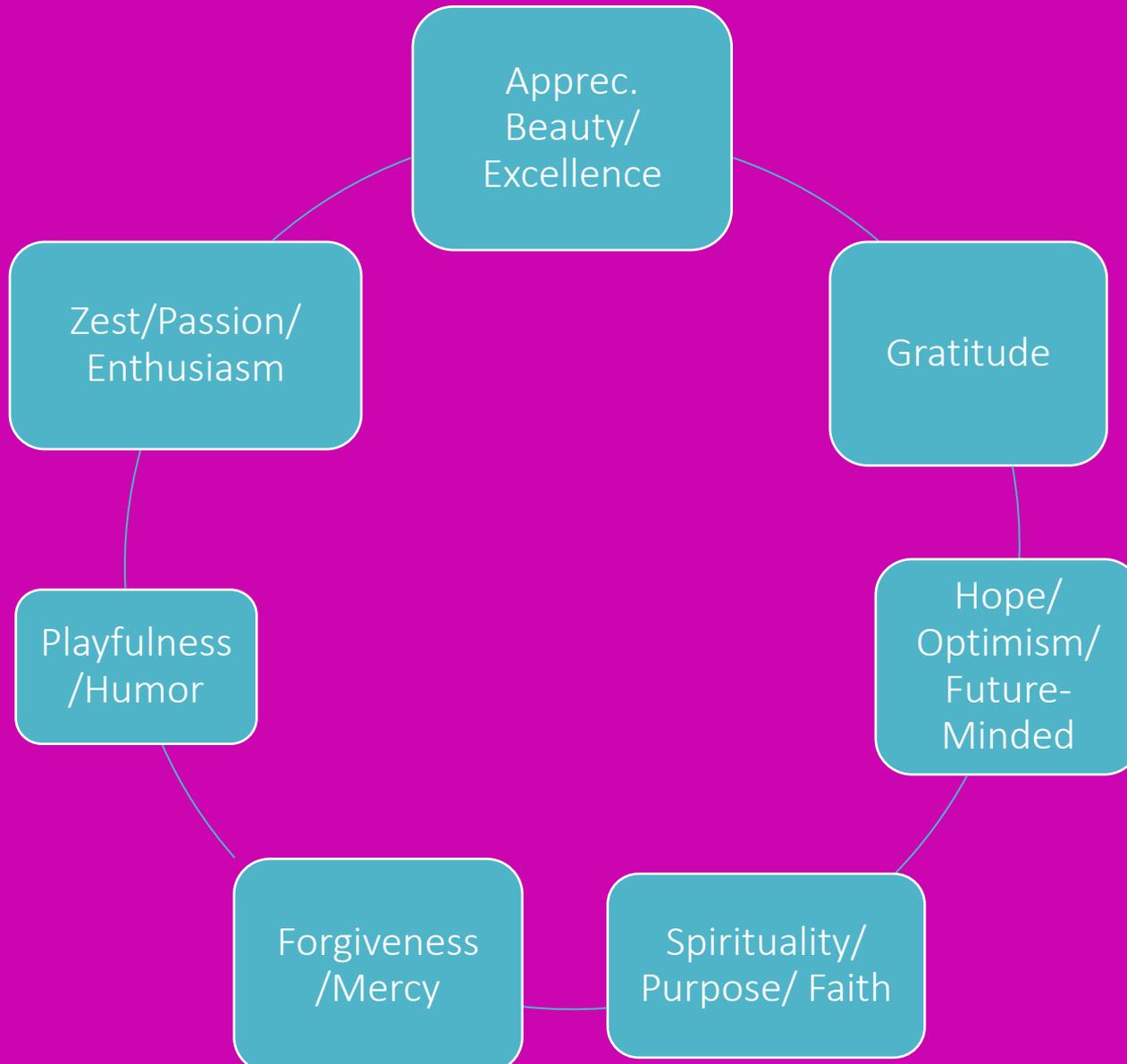
Justice



Temperance



Transcendence



Signature Strengths Test

- Available to take at www.authentic happiness.com or in book.
- Most people will have five or fewer strengths rated highly, and about that number rated low (as weaknesses)
- Seize on and celebrate your strengths, aware of them
- Practice them more intensively

Methods to Assess Subjective Well-Being

Self-report surveys: How satisfied are you?

Family and friends

Smiling, laughing

Biological indicators

Cognitive measures (e.g., memory)

These CONVERGE!

To flourish, one must have:

1. Positive emotion (authentic happiness)
2. Engagement (flow)—living in the present
3. Meaning, purpose—derive value, worthiness in life
4. Self-esteem
5. Optimism—positive emotions that are future oriented
6. Resilience
7. Positive Relationships

Denmark—33% of population “flourishes”

United Kingdom—18%

Russia—Only 6%

Two more thoughts...

- Win-win scenarios are important
- Resilience
- Belonging...

Next Week

Dealing with the “Downside”
vulnerability and shame
—True Self/False Self

Questions & Conversation

Bibliography

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Contributors to Subjective Well-Being

Life satisfaction

With life and domains of life (marriage, work, etc.)

Positive Feelings

Joy, enjoyment, love, awe, etc.

Low Negative Feelings

Anger, depression, anxiety, envy, guilt (shame)