

Good Reads on Positive Psychology

Positive Emotion

Authentic Happiness, Seligman (2002) This book is routinely cited in the literature. A foundational text.

The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom, Haidt (2005) It's not just intelligences that are multiple! Try multiple brains! Or, at least, multiple relatively independent systems in the brain. Haidt's metaphor of the rider and the elephant is worth reading the book. Great writer. Sound insights.

Positive Explanatory Style, Optimism, and Resilience

Learned Optimism, Seligman (1991) -- more depth on explanatory style as a construct and the research behind it than is provided in the more recent *Authentic Happiness*.

The Optimistic Child, Seligman (1995) – in addition to research insights and suggestions on the question of how children develop their explanatory styles, this book has one of the best explanations of the “ABCDE” technique, a key component of moving to a more flexible, accurate style.

The Resilience Factor: 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles, Shatté & Reivich (2002) Practical, practical, practical. How to apply the insights.

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success (2006) and *Self-Theories: Their Role in Personality, Motivation, and Development* (2000) by Carol Dweck . Both of these books detail findings from Dr. Dweck's extensive research into two particular kinds of “me” beliefs – those that are growth oriented versus those that see causes as fixed in unchanging personal qualities. (If this sounds like her work drew inspiration from Dr. Seligman's explanatory style work, she confirms that in one of these books.) *Mindset* is more for popular audiences; it's longer, written in a more conversational style, and cheaper. *Self-Theories*, however, is very readable and I enjoyed the deeper insights into the actual studies she and her colleagues conducted.

Strengths

Character Strengths and Virtues, Peterson & Seligman (2004) This is the definitive work on the VIA Character Strengths. The first part of the book explains the approach that was taken in identifying this set of character strengths. The rest serves as a reference resource with a chapter on each strength about the research, measures, correlates, and possible future directions on each of the strengths.

Strengthsfinder 2.0, Tom Rath (2007) This book explains and provides access to the most current version of Gallup's online tool for identification of their 34 talents that underlie our strongest strengths of action.

Go Put Your Strengths to Work, Marcus Buckingham (2007). Marcus Buckingham, formerly with Gallup and now an independent researcher, consultant, and speaker, shows how to take the generic talents identified by Strengthsfinder and turn them into specific, powerful, and emotionally captivating personal strengths statements. He provides a step-by-step approach to re-crafting your work around your strengths, thereby benefiting both yourself and your enterprise.

Relationships – “Other people matter.” Chris Peterson

Vital Friends, Tom Rath (2006). This is another Gallup book. Rath, a MAPP classmate, describes Gallup's discoveries concerning the various roles friends can fulfill and how to use this information to be a better friend and to strengthen the web of friendships around you.

The Relationship Cure, John Gottman (2002). Gottman is the pre-eminent researcher on relationships, especially marriage. This is his presentation of his research applied to a broader array of relationships. Interestingly, the 5:1 positive to negative ratio for excellence discovered by Losada in relation to business teams also shows up here.

Aging Well, George Vaillant (2002). Reports on multiple, longitudinal studies now under the administration of Dr. Vaillant. Science, yes, but also uplifting and hopeful. The importance of relationships is emphasized by these studies.

Living in a Consumer Society

The Paradox of Choice, Barry Schwartz (2004). Are you generally a "maximizer" or "satisficer"? Should you care? Good book not only for consumers, but for achievers. Since nothing's ever "finished", what does "do your best" mean?

Organizational Leadership

On an organizational level, the following are all solid in content and very readable.

Psychological Capital, Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007). Introduces the PsyCap construct – a composite of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. Includes the 24-item questionnaire and information on the "micro-intervention" the authors have developed. The authors also discuss other possible components of PsyCap and future research directions. Includes comprehensive citations.

Building the Bridge as You Walk On It, Robert Quinn (2004). Phenomenal. Outstanding on leadership, but, as the stories in the book suggest, perhaps even more important to being a parent, friend, spouse, community member.

Making the Impossible Possible: Leading Extraordinary Performance: The Rocky Flats Story Cameron & Lavine (2006). Very readable and a great introduction to Cameron's work over the years looking at the four quadrants of excellence that must co-exist, despite paradoxes, for outstanding organizational success.

Energize Your Workplace Jane Dutton (2003). The why and the how of positive human relationships at work. If you ever get an opportunity to hear Jane Dutton, jump on it!