Instructor questions

Question Banks

for

*Positive Psychology: The Science of Well-Being*

by

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Note: This file contains questions designed for *instructors* and includes approximately three short answer questions (with text excerpts relevant to answers) and ~15 multiple-choice questions. Correct answers are indicated with an asterisk.

# Chapter 1: Describing the science of positive psychology

## Short answers

1. What is a third variable problem? What does this problem look like in correlational designs? In experimental designs?

 We cannot conclude a causal link between two things that are correlated because a ‘third variable’ may account for correlation – that third variable may cause both parts of the correlation. Even when we do not know what the potential third variables are, we know it is possible that they exist, and so we must avoid narrow causal interpretations of correlations.

 Experimental studies are also not completely immune from the third variable problem we discussed with the correlational approach. Experiments do a good job of ruling out some third variables, particularly those that participants would ‘bring to the study’ (like personality, gender and life histories) because random assignment makes experimental groups equivalent in these ways (things average out). However, in psychology, it is very difficult to directly manipulate many of the things we are interested in studying. Thoughts and feelings are internal, so we usually take an indirect route (e.g. showing a happy or sad video to manipulate mood). Also, when we manipulate one thing, we may unintentionally manipulate other things – those other things are like our dreaded third variables in the correlational approach.

 In experimental studies, these potential third variables are called confounds. The third variable is ‘confounded’ with what the experimenter intended to manipulate.

2. Why are less rigid but appreciative stances on human nature, and positive topics more descriptive of positive psychology than positive intention of psychologists, and positive ideology for human nature? Support your statement with relevant examples.

 However, ‘good intentions’ does not seem like the best way to define positive psychology. Many psychologists whose work does not seem to fit under the positive psychology umbrella still care deeply about improving the lives of others.

 If we define positive psychology as positive assumptions about human nature, we risk having positive psychology ‘disproven’. Analogies to other fields help underscore the issue; is it possible to falsify biology, chemistry or economics in their entirety? No, even though prominent ideas in those fields have been revised over time. If positive psychology is defined by rigid assumptions about human nature, it is difficult for credible science to come from it. We do not want to produce easily dismissed or agenda-driven ‘evidence’.

 Thus, it seems healthy and useful that (positive) psychologists cultivate a sense of appreciation for human nature, but to do so with some flexibility, open-mindedness and lucidity. This need not make them different from all other psychologists, but it does seem a reasonable feature of positive psychology.

 In this vein, one way we can define the ‘positive’ in positive psychology is via its topics, targets and techniques; positive psychology is about positive things. For example, positive psychology is about forgiveness rather than revenge, joy rather than sadness, cooperation rather than competition and resilience rather than defeat. Positive psychology seems to be about the positive poles in dichotomies such as these.

3. What is the ‘greater than zero’ analogy? Why is this an important feature of positive psychology?

 Greater than zero analogy: Positive psychology is not about bringing people from negative to 0, but, rather, focussing on what lies in the positive territory of this metaphorical number line (or literally interpreted as a scale of happiness). When we focus on terms or topics in the positive zone, it goes beyond word games, instead prompting new domains of study and application.

## Multiple choice

1. Positive psychology is *primarily* concerned with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. happiness

b. optimal human functioning

c. reducing mental health problems

d. self-help

**Ans:** B

2. Which of the following was not a common topic of study in mainstream psychology?

a. Mental illness

b. Maladaptive behaviour

c. Irrationality

d. Flourishing

**Ans:** D

3. The greatest strength of positive psychology has been \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. its ability to rebalance psychology

b. its lack of focus on the negative

c. its ability to study fun subjects

d. its optimistic approach to science

**Ans:** A

4. In his blog Data Colada, Nelson (2014) described the classic \_\_\_\_\_\_ as the phenomenon where people draw on their own behaviour when judging the behaviour of others.

a. bias effect

b. false consensus effect

c. ego effect

d. psychology effect

**Ans:** B

5. Positive psychologists typically consider \_\_\_\_\_\_ to know whether or not something is positive.

a. habits, choice of career and relationships

b. cognitive ability, personality and perception

c. choices, values and subjective experiences

d. mental health, social functioning and performance

**Ans:** C

6. Positive psychologists rely on \_\_\_\_\_\_ to understand people.

a. strong opinions

b. historical documents

c. the self-help method

d. the scientific method

**Ans:** D

7. In a longitudinal study by Harker and Keltner (2001), women who expressed more positive emotions in their photos were more likely to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. be unmarried by age 27

b. score higher on the traits of affiliation and competence

c. score high on the trait of negative emotionality

d. earn lower incomes at age 30

**Ans:** B

8. What does the correlation coefficient describe?

a. The causal direction of the association between two things

b. The strength and direction of the association between two things

c. The longitudinal association between two things

d. The likelihood of a ‘third variable’

**Ans:** B

9. An experience sampling study is \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. conducted over multiple points in time

b. synonymous to an experimental design

c. conducted with different age groups

d. the only way to infer causality

**Ans:** A

10. An important characteristic of an experimental manipulation is that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. participants are randomly assigned to conditions

b. participants choose their own condition

c. participants are not assigned to any condition

d. there is only one condition

**Ans:** A

11. Why we do not have to worry about the causal direction of findings in an experiment?

a. Because the experimental manipulation comes after the dependent variable

b. Because participants can choose their condition

c. Because the dependent variable comes after the independent variable

d. Because most experiments are conducted in laboratories

**Ans:** C

12. What do we call a variable that is the outcome of a manipulation?

a. An independent variable

b. A confound variable

c. A random variable

d. A dependent variable

**Ans:** D

13. The key element of a randomized clinical trial is that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. it follows the correlational approach

b. it follows the experimental approach

c. the outcome variables are chosen randomly

d. all confounds have been eliminated with certainty

**Ans:** B

14. An important challenge in showing how positive psychology courses improve well-being is that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. there is no evidence that students’ well-being actually improves

b. positive psychology courses tend to have low enrollments

c. most positive psychology instructors are uninterested in the question

d. courses often include both instruction and experiential exercises, either of which might help

**Ans:** D

# Chapter 2: Positive emotions

## Short answers

1. Describe the five most common appraisal dimensions. How are appraisal dimensions related to positive emotions? Support your statement with relevant examples.

 Is the event relevant to my goals or concerns? Is the event consistent or inconsistent with my goals or concerns? How certain am I? Is the event caused by myself, someone else or something else? Can I cope with or control the event?

 Positive emotions occur when events are appraised as relevant and consistent with goals.

 The other appraisal dimensions can further refine positive feelings into more specific emotional experiences.

 Appraisals are not just about objective circumstances; they are interpretations that depend on the idiosyncratic goals, skills and knowledge of the individual making the appraisal.

 For example, pride involves a sense of personal control and responsibility, whereas awe is associated with a diminished sense of self and external causes (Shiota, Keltner, & Mossman, 2007). Each emotion has a recipe with a unique blend of different appraisals as ingredients.

2. What does the term ‘emotional expression’ imply and why are these expressions important? How do people typically express emotions? Support your statement with relevant examples.

 The term ‘expression’ implies that they reveal something about internal states.

 In this way, expressions help communicate those states to other people.

 Emotions can be expressed in vocalizations (sounds) by varying pitch and tone – even without speech, such as with sighs, giggles and grunts (Juslin & Laukka, 2003; Sauter, Eisner, Ekman, & Scott, 2010). Gestures, changes in posture and touch can also signal emotions (Tracy & Robins, 2004), yet most research has focused on the face.

 For example, typical expressions of anger involve contracting the brow, and tightening muscles around the eyes and mouth.

3. What is the ‘duration neglect’ phenomenon? What results did Redelmeier and Kahneman (1996) find in their study of remembered pain of colonoscopy procedures?

 Remembering self pays little attention to time.

 When remembering experiences, moments are not created equally. Our memories depend particularly on the peak intensity and on how episodes ended.

 An hour after the procedure, patients rated the ‘total amount of pain experienced’. Objectively, patients who experienced longer procedures experienced more pain, because it lasted longer (see Figure 2.3). However, the study found that actual time was unrelated to patients’ ratings of ‘total pain’. Total pain ratings depended more on how the procedures ended (high or low pain) and how bad the very worst (peak) moment was.

 A follow-up study asked doctors to try making some colonoscopies last longer – creating objectively more pain – by keeping the camera relatively still in the rectum, and thus creating a mild ending to the procedure. Compared to participants who had regular, shorter and objectively less painful procedures, the experimental group with mild endings reported substantially less pain.

## Multiple choice

1. Through many repetitions, \_\_\_\_\_\_ tracks the ebb and flow of experience in people’s daily lives.

a. the flow state method

b. the experience sampling method

c. the repetition method

d. the correlational method

**Ans:** B

2. What do positive emotions promote?

a. Exploration, creativity and sociability

b. Future negative emotions

c. Mental health problems

d. Specific action tendencies

**Ans:** A

3. People are more sensitive to signs of threat because \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. threats produce long-lasting emotional states

b. threats quickly grab our attention

c. threats are processed at an unconscious level

d. threats are more easily remembered

**Ans:** B

4. Ekman and Frisen’s (1971) research on facial expressions across all humans is limited because they \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. only studied people in European and North American countries

b. only took black and white photographs of participants’ facial expressions

c. did not take into account expressions of unpleasant emotions

d. did not take into account non-facial physical expressions of pleasant emotions

**Ans:** D

5. Emotions \_\_\_\_\_\_, while moods are \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. occur in a few seconds or minutes; slower to change

b. are always conscious; often unconscious

c. ambiguously caused, caused by a single event

d. are always unconscious, never unconscious

**Ans:** A

6. The dimensional perspective of emotions \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. describes emotions that have specific causes, are brief and have automatic consequences

b. does not have clear categorical boundaries for particular emotions

c. only describes emotions that are low in intensity

d. describes emotions along a spectrum of internal to external causes

**Ans:** B

7. The five components of emotions include \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. appraisals, physiological change, expressions, subjective experience and action tendencies

b. intensity, duration, valence, cause and outcome

c. joy, contentment, fear, disgust and sadness

d. love, happiness, pride, sorrow and fear

**Ans:** A

8. In \_\_\_\_\_\_, bodily functions like heart rate and electrodermal activity are measured to infer psychological processes.

a. electroencephalography

b. psychophysiology

c. positron emission tomography

d. neuropsychology

**Ans:** B

9. Positive psychologists have determined that the recognition of emotional expressions is \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. culture specific

b. universal

c. more accurate for positive emotions

d. easier for people who share a culture with the expresser

**Ans:** D

10. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is distinct from \_\_\_\_\_\_ in the brain.

a. Wanting; liking

b. Wanting; addiction

c. Cannabinoids; liking

d. Opioids; liking

**Ans:** A

11. The two-dimensional conceptual space where emotion terms are arranged is also called the \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. emotional arousal model

b. circumplex

c. subjective experience of emotions

d. dimensional model of emotions

**Ans:** B

12. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule measures \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. physiological and cognitive emotional activations

b. motivations and subjective feelings

c. emotion appraisals

d. self-reported pleasant and unpleasant feelings

**Ans:** D

13. Studies have found that when rating current feelings, \_\_\_\_\_\_ are almost non-existent. However, when recalling those moments later, memories follow \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. self-related memories; the self

b. positive emotions; high arousal positive emotions

c. gender and cultural differences; stereotypes

d. appraisals; beliefs

**Ans:** C

14. The motivational parts of emotions are also called \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. action tendencies

b. appraisals

c. subjective experiences

d. basic emotions

**Ans:** A

15. The idea that positive emotions widen the scope of thoughts and behaviours comes from \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. circumplex model of emotions

b. broaden and build model of positive emotions

c. humanistic model of positive emotions

d. basic emotion view

**Ans:** B

16. Positive emotions seem to make \_\_\_\_\_\_ less likely.

a. spending time alone

b. spending time with friends

c. spending time with family

d. artistic pursuits

**Ans:** A

17. Which of the following is not an important challenge in studying the link between physical health and positive emotions is that \_\_\_\_\_\_?

a. the causal direction may go both ways

b. the physiology of health and emotions is complex

c. patterns may differ across groups and cultures

d. it is difficult to find samples with significant links between the two

**Ans:** D

# Chapter 3: Happiness

## Short answers

1. How can we differentiate a general sense of happiness from happiness as a brief emotional state? Why is it difficult to define this long-term happiness?

 This is not to say that happiness never changes, but we do want to distinguish a general sense of happiness from more transitory emotions and moods. Very happy people have bad days, and miserable people have pleasant moments.

 One way to think of this more long-term happiness is as a mental running average of momentary feelings over one’s life.

 Although the term happiness is often used to describe a pleasant emotional state, happiness can also be understood broadly, something that includes various narrower components (like emotions and satisfaction).

 What does it mean to be truly happy? For some, happiness is mainly about feeling good; for others, it is more about living a morally good life.

 Because the term happiness can be viewed in different ways, psychologists often replace happiness with the jargon term ‘subjective well-being’, which is defined more precisely. Subjective well-being is first subjective. It is how individuals view their own well-being, not how a philosopher, psychologist or any other expert would evaluate it. It is personal and in the mind of its subject. Defining well-being might raise the same thorny issues involved in defining happiness, but with the term subjective well-being, psychologists decided on a specific meaning when they coined it.

2. Briefly describe the six components of Ryff’s (1989) approach to psychological well-being.

Self-acceptance: a positive view of the past and present self that acknowledges good and bad aspects

Positive relations with other people: trusting, intimate and caring relationships with others

Autonomy: independence, authenticity, use of personal standards to guide behaviour and resistance of social pressures

Environmental mastery: competence, seizing opportunities, finding contexts conducive to needs and values

Purpose in life: clear goals, sense of meaning, important projects and sense that things are worthwhile

Personal growth: openness and sense of continuing development and positive changes over one’s lifetime

3. Should people strive to be more happy? Support your answer with relevant examples.

Happiness is associated – and very likely can help cause – success and health.

Broad reviews suggest that happiness is useful more often than not, but this does not mean happiness is the most important factor; it is rarely the single best predictor. Counter examples – where happy people do more poorly – exist too (see Gruber, Mauss, & Tamir, 2011). This is particularly true when we examine positive states. Some high-intensity positive emotions may tax, rather than mend, physiological systems. Happy moments can make people careless and more prone to stereotyping – positive moods are associated with taking mental shortcuts. When competing or negotiating, unpleasant emotions can facilitate success.

The very happiest people still experience unpleasant emotions in their daily life, just a bit less frequently than unhappy people (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Long-term well-being and success are not the result of constant, inflexible or delusional positive affect. In sum, there are clearly moments when happiness is not the best way to feel.

It seems plausible that high happiness could hinder some artistic or critical endeavours or produce unwarranted optimism or complacency. There are some empirical hints that more happiness is not always better. Such findings seem to depend on whether we consider achievement or good relationships.

Across a collection of large data sets, Oishi, Diener, and Lucas (2007) found that very high happiness was associated with close relationships and volunteering without limit – the happiest people had the richest social and most prosocial lives. The trend was different for measures of achievement, however. Subjective well-being was positively associated with income and achievement in school, yet with an exception for very highest levels of happiness. Over time, the happiest people tended to earn less money than the moderately happy people (but both earned more than unhappy people). Said another way, when it comes to achievement, the optimal level of happiness might be more like 8.5 – rather than 10 – on a 10-point scale. For good relationships, 10 may well be best.

## Multiple choice

1. Positive psychologists define subjective well-being as including \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. high life satisfaction and moderate pleasant and unpleasant emotions

\*b. high life satisfaction, many pleasant emotions and few unpleasant emotions

c. Moderate life satisfaction, many pleasant emotions and moderate unpleasant emotions

d. None of these

**Ans:** B

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ life satisfaction judgements are often preferred over \_\_\_\_\_\_ life satisfaction judgements because of individual differences.

\*a. Overall; domain-specific

b. Domain-specific; overall

c. Moderate; positive

d. Objective; subjective

**Ans:** A

3. Positive psychologists often use the terms \_\_\_\_\_\_ to describe eudaimonia.

a. negative emotions, self-sacrifice and meaning

b. happiness, feeling good, positive emotions and pleasure

\*c. sense of purpose, meaning, authenticity and growth

d. activity, honestly and good nutrition

**Ans:** C

4. What are the five key aspects of well-being proposed by Seligman (2012)?

\*a. Positive emotion, engagement, healthy relationships, meaning and accomplishment

b. Few negative emotions, income; marriage, age and education

c. Environment, heredity, culture, age and education

d. Positive emotions, few negative emotions, income, age and education

**Ans:** A

5. Key personality differences among people are often measured using the \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. big two

b. positive and negative affect schedule

c. satisfaction with life scale

\*d. big five

**Ans:** D

6. The big five personality traits are \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. emotional stability, neuroticism, introversion, extraversion and openness

\*b. emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness, introversion-extraversion and openness

c. optimism, conscientiousness, openness, empathy and shyness

d. introversion-extraversion, optimism, emotional stability, neuroticism and agreeableness

**Ans:** B

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_ estimates how much variation in a group is due to differences in genes.

a. Personality

b. Life satisfaction

c. Well-being

\*d. Heritability

**Ans:** D

8. Non-genetic influences are usually termed \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. the environment

b. heritability

c. well-being

d. life satisfaction

**Ans:** A

9. In Diener and Seligman’s (2002) study, very happy people had \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. more religiosity

b. more physical attractiveness

\*c. more and better social relationships

d. better grades

**Ans:** C

10. Happiness tends to be \_\_\_\_\_\_ across the life span in developed countries.

a. widely and randomly variable

b. mostly decreasing

c. mostly increasing

\*d. mostly stable

**Ans:** D

11. The link between education and happiness is stronger among \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. people who are poorer

b. people who are richer

c. women

d. men

**Ans:** A

12. Happier people are more likely to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. not get married

b. marry and get divorced

c. get married at a younger age

\*d. marry and stay married

**Ans:** D

13. People who have a religious practice (no matter the denomination) report higher subjective well-being, especially \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. in wealthier countries

b. for older individuals

\*c. under difficult circumstances

d. in cooler climates

**Ans:** C

14. People’s tendency to return to a ‘baseline’ level of happiness is knows as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. adaptation

b. personality

c. life satisfaction

d. negative emotions

**Ans:** A

15. The ‘hedonic treadmill’ refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. people preferring pleasure to meaning

\*b. people going back to their personal set point after a period of adaptation

c. people trying to live the good life

d. increases in happiness over a person’s life

**Ans:** B

16. Bhutan is notable in the domain of happiness because \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. it was the first to prioritize gross national happiness

b. it is ranked as the happiest nation on planet Earth in most years

c. it was the first nation to implement mandatory happiness training

d. scholars agree that it measures happiness most accurately

**Ans:** A

17. In which of the following nations do most people see an ideal life as ‘very happy’?

\*a. Germany

b. Ghana

c. Japan

d. Pakistan

**Ans:** A

# Chapter 4: Personality

## Short answers

1. Identify two important phases in the development of personalities. How do these phases interact with one another, and with the environment over time?

All people begin with their genes, and these genes have evolved over millions of years. Evolutionary processes can produce commonalities among people (e.g. human abilities like spoken language), as well as differences (e.g. consistent costs and benefits of risky vs. conservative strategies).

In fact, we can see the three levels of personality in genes. All humans share many genes (some of which are also shared with non-human animals) – these are universal. There are also gene variants that we share with some people, but not others.

Collectively, many small genetic differences like this contribute to more substantial and observable individual differences, such as the trait of emotional stability. People are also completely unique in their particular combinations of gene variants – one’s individual genome.

When babies are born, they have temperamental features that developed via genes interacting with the pre-natal environment. Temperamental differences are apparent right away. For example, some newborns are fussy, and others are quieter. These very early temperamental features have links to adult personality; yet, there is still much development and growth that will occur, and thus, adult characteristics are not pre-determined at this early stage.

Influences include the efforts of parents and how they respond the child’s temperament, the random events that occur in everyone’s life and the cultural regularities that each person encounters. As people have and seek out experiences, some characteristics are reinforced and others are changed.

The norm is for continuity in personality from childhood to adulthood, but this does not preclude dramatic changes at times. Maturation also occurs. As children grow, new parts of personality develop.

2. List and provide brief examples of the four ways that the big five model can be accepted as a good map of personality.

Wide applicability: At a broad level, the big five traits are found in most languages. People in diverse cultures understand the traits, and the correlations among questionnaire items are similar to those found in English. The big five are even found in non-human animal species, with traits coded by human observers or caretakers (Gosling, 2008). However, only genetically close species, such as chimpanzees, seem to have all five traits.

Heritability: The big five traits, like many personality characteristics, are moderately heritable (Bouchard & Loehlin, 2001). Genetic variation explains a substantial part of observed variation in traits; yet, this does not argue against the notion that development and experience are also important (see Chapter 3 for more on interpreting heritability).

Stability: On average, trait scores are remarkably stable over time, with sizable correlations between measurements taken decades apart.

Predictive power: Because traits are generally stable over long periods of time, we can use them to predict important life outcomes (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006; Roberts, Kuncel, Shiner, Caspi, & Goldberg, 2007). Even when assessed years before, trait scores can indicate who is more likely to get and keep a good job, be happy, remain married or live a long and healthy life. For example, the traits of low conscientiousness, emotional stability and agreeableness predict divorce far better than low socioeconomic status; also, the big five traits (collectively) predict occupational status almost as well as general intelligence (Roberts et al., 2007). Especially relevant to positive psychology, extraversion and emotional stability are the best predictors of subjective well-being within a nation, even over long periods of time.

3. What did Rusting (1999) conclude from her research on the cognitive processes behind introversion-extraversion and neuroticism? What does this research teach us about these personality traits and their implications?

We see that these traits predicted (correlated with) how people performed on positive versus negative content in the task. Extraversion was associated with more positive and neuroticism with more negative interpretations and recall. It seems these traits are associated with some biases in thinking, beyond motivation and emotional experience per se.

Extraverts seem more attuned to pleasure seeking. This makes them happier on average; yet, it can also get them into trouble at times (e.g. more accidents, drug abuse). In contrast, trait neuroticism reflects a sensitivity to threats and potential punishments. This can help keep people high in neuroticism safe, but with the costs of frequent anxiety and some missed opportunities.

## Multiple choice

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_ refers to the individual, internal characteristics that produce regularities in thoughts, feelings and actions.

a. Motives

\*b. Personality

c. Values

d. Desires

**Ans:** B

2. According to self-determination theory, all humans need \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. competence, autonomy and relatedness

b. to always do what they want to do

c. a self-concept

d. to know their primal beliefs

**Ans:** A

3. The middle level of individual differences – or what makes people different than some other people – includes, for example, demographics, values, attitudes, attachment styles and \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. traits

b. life stories

c. personal projects

d. idiosyncrasies

**Ans:** A

4. If you describe someone as reliable, curious and shy, you are talking about \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. preferences

b. self-esteem

c. attitudes

\*d. traits

**Ans:** D

5. An important goal of correlating an immense list of trait terms with one another was to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. come up with a map of ‘personality space’

b. see which language had the most trait terms

c. prove that traits exist

d. ensure that questionnaires contain all possible items

**Ans:** A

6. All approaches to the study of traits came to a relative consensus on a model of personality traits called \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. the big five factor model

b. the VIA strengths model

c. self-determination theory

d. personality wheel of colour

**Ans:** A

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_ define broader traits more concretely.

a. Personality

b. Types

c. Values

\*d. Facets

**Ans:** D

8. Extraversion may result from \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. more resilience to potential threats in the environment

b. less sensitivity to potential rewards in the environment

\*c. stronger sensitivity to potential rewards in the environment

d. less resilience to potential threats in the environment

**Ans:** C

9. States can provide information about traits when \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. measured at one point in time

\*b. they are observed multiple times to form a collection of behaviours

c. paired with strong emotions

d. paired with a clear goal

**Ans:** B

10. Psychologists have used \_\_\_\_\_\_ to clarify the links between states and traits.

\*a. experience sampling method

b. signature strengths

c. Myers–Briggs type inventory

d. differences among people

**Ans:** A

11. \_\_\_\_\_\_ are temporary and sensitive to the immediate context; they are short-term units.

a. Traits

b. Personalities

\*c. States

d. Goals

**Ans:** C

12. \_\_\_\_\_\_ are the things people want to accomplish.

a. Needs

\*b. Goals

c. Traits

d. Desires

**Ans:** B

13. \_\_\_\_\_\_ are seen as universally important, positive and useful, but they are also prone to individual and cultural differences.

a. Desires

b. The self-concepts

c. Needs

\*d. Values

**Ans:** D

14. Thinking that two actually different things are the same because they share a name is known as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. the jangle fallacy

\*b. the jingle fallacy

c. the perception fallacy

d. the big five fallacy

**Ans:** B

15. The ‘manual of the sanities’ crafted by positive psychologists was created to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. disprove Aristotle’s notion of eudaimonia

b. expand the list of mental disorders

\*c. list things that are good about human nature

d. list basic needs

**Ans:** C

16. The VIA classification of virtues and character strengths includes \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence

b. agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness and introversion-extraversion

c. sensation, intuition, perception and judgement

d. positive emotions, happiness, well-being and relationships

**Ans:** A

17. Research comparing traits and strengths suggest that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. they are completely redundant sets of individual differences

\*b. they have considerable similarities with some elements unique to each set

c. results are too complex to characterize their similarity

d. traits are heritable and strengths are not heritable

**Ans:** B

18. Which of the following strengths has the strongest positive correlation with subjective well-being?

\*a. love

b. prudence

c. self-regulation

d. humility

**Ans:** A

19. The primary purpose of mindfulness-bases strength practice is to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. maximize pleasant feelings

b. maximize people’s use of their signature strengths

c. maximize use of all strengths

\*d. make people more aware of their strengths in daily life

**Ans:** D

# Chapter 5: The self

## Short answers

1. Based on Fleeson and Wilt’s (2010) research, how are big five traits and behaviours in these domains associated with state authenticity? What do the results teach us about authenticity?

Results of experience sampling studies – where trait-relevant behaviours and authenticity were rated together in the moment – showed that people’s dispositional traits were not important to state authenticity. Rather, people felt more authentic when they behaved in extraverted, stable, open, agreeable and conscientious ways, regardless of their dispositions.

The results tell us that Dawn the introvert is likely to feel more authentic when she behaves in more extraverted ways. (Recall from Chapter 4 that most people engage in a wide range of behaviours, even while traits describe average tendencies well.) Roni the extravert also feels authentic when behaving in extraverted ways – it seems there may be something about extraverted (and open, agreeable, etc.) behaviour that promotes authenticity, regardless of one’s trait level.

2. What is self-efficacy and why is it important to understanding well-being? Support your answer with relevant examples.

Self-efficacy is the personal belief that one can successfully enact behaviours that will lead to desirable outcomes. People have many different efficacy beliefs; they are separate for the particular domain or task at hand.

Self-efficacy is key to understanding well-being because it directs people towards active engagement with meaningful pursuits.

High self-efficacy connotes a sense of being able to overcome challenges, but beliefs are also updated based on circumstances.

Across many studies, people’s engagement and success is substantially higher when they have a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2011). That is, we tend to avoid activities with low self-efficacy and take up pursuits where self-efficacy is high, where we believe we can enact the important behaviours.

For example, workplaces are contexts where motivated engagement with tasks has important payoffs, and self-efficacy is a good predictor of job performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Similarly, academic achievement is strongly predicted by self-efficacy (Schneider & Preckel, 2016). People with low self-efficacy for an activity (e.g. work or school) are unlikely to give as much effort, and then, predictably, less likely to succeed. In this way, a belief about the self (‘I think I can do it’) spurs desirable action.

3*.* What is self-esteem? How do self-esteem and self-efficacy differ? Support your answer with relevant examples.

Self-esteem is a positive evaluation of the self; it is having a sense of worth, competence and personal satisfaction in valued domains. It is also subjective – about what one believes, rather than objective reality.

Normally, we think of self-esteem as an overall, general self-evaluation. This contrasts with self-efficacy which is typically more specific, about a particular goal or set of behaviours. Exceptions to this trend do exist, that is, one can assess general self-efficacy or narrower evaluations of esteem in particular domains. However, this is far less common and less consistent with their theoretical origins.

Whereas self-esteem is largely a feeling of positivity about the self, self-efficacy is more a cognitive judgement about ability.

In addition, self-esteem depends on feeling competent in areas that are personally valued; self-efficacy is simply the judgement that the behaviours can be enacted, regardless of importance.

For example, Sean may have high self-efficacy for doing arithmetic and low self-efficacy for making shots in basketball. These are assessments of what he can do. Sean’s general self-esteem will be higher or lower depending on how important success in arithmetic or basketball are to his sense of self. If basketball is unimportant, the low basketball self-efficacy and poor performance are irrelevant to Sean’s self-esteem. Of course, there are some things that most people do care about, such as having strong interpersonal relationships; these domains are thus commonly important to self-esteem.

## Multiple choice

1. The \_\_\_\_\_\_ was used by William James (1890) to describe the part of the self that is experienced as an object to be known.

a. I

\*b. me

c. self

d. self-concept

**Ans:** B

2. Meaning in life is an aspect of \_\_\_\_\_\_ because it includes subjective judgements about one’s satisfaction and emotional experience.

a. self-efficacy

b. life satisfaction

\*c. the self-concept

d. personality

**Ans:** C

3. The idea that we should get to know and act consistently with our true selves is synonymous with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. authenticity

b. self-concept

c. the ‘good life’

d. freedom

**Ans:** A

4. According to \_\_\_\_\_\_ it is important that people do things that are authentic to the self.

a. self-esteem theory

\*b. self-determination theory

c. self-concept theory

d. person-environment fit theory

**Ans:** B

5. People are intrinsically motivated when they do things \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. with a clear goal to feel authentic

b. because of external pressures

\*c. because they genuinely enjoy them

d. with a clear goal to find meaning

**Ans:** C

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_ studies are concerned with the true self in the present moment.

\*a. State authenticity

b. Self-concept

c. Well-being

d. Dispositional authenticity

**Ans:** A

7. People report feeling authentic when they \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. are high on self-esteem and experiencing unpleasant emotions

b. act in a way that aligns with their traits

c. are extrinsically motivated by positive things

\*d. feel good, confident, and when meeting important needs

**Ans:** D

8. A sense of meaning in life is thought to come from the sense that life is \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. coherent, significant and purposeful

b. fun, novel and exciting

c. authentic, efficacious and compassionate

d. challenging, perplexing and short

**Ans:** A

9. Of the options below, which is most commonly reported as a source of meaning?

a. victory

b. defeat

c. work

\*d. family

**Ans:** D

10. A momentary sense of meaning is more likely when experiencing \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. pleasant emotions

b. unpleasant emotions

c. an existential crisis

d. interpersonal conflict

**Ans:** A

11. Narcissism is similar to high self-esteem because they both share \_\_\_\_\_\_. However, narcissism also includes \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. negative evaluations of the self; positive evaluations of the self

\*b. positive evaluations of the self; a sense of superiority and entitlement

c. positive evaluations of the self; low negative emotions

d. objective evaluations of the self; a sense of superiority and entitlement

**Ans:** B

12. Research suggests that \_\_\_\_\_\_ can be increased with persuasive messages from other people.

a. meaning in life

b. self-esteem

\*c. self-efficacy

d. authenticity

**Ans:** C

13. In Luszcynska, Tryburcy, and Shwarzer’s (2007) healthy eating study, self-efficacy was manipulated by giving participants \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. information about the usefulness of high self-efficacy in boosting self-esteem, a strict healthy eating plan and extrinsic motivators in the form of money rewards

b. information on how negative emotions can boost self-efficacy through resilience, brief videos of potential eating triggers and intrinsic motivation in the form of social praise

\*c. information about the usefulness of high self-efficacy in meeting goals, brief exercises to improve self-efficacy for healthy eating and persuasion and reminders of past success

d. free vegetables

**Ans:** C

14. If we want to increase well-being, it may be easier to teach \_\_\_\_\_\_ rather than trying to change \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. specific skills; self-esteem

b. self-esteem; negative situations

c. authenticity; existing perceptions of self

d. intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation

**Ans:** A

15. Self-compassion is associated with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. lower performance, negative emotions, motivation and higher mindfulness

b. more negative emotions, resilience and coping skills

\*c. higher self-esteem, conscientiousness, academic mastery and curiosity

d. higher agreeableness, extraversion and less negative emotions

**Ans:** C

16. In the Twenty Statements Test, Euro-Americans are more likely to describe themselves with \_\_\_\_\_\_, while Japanese were more likely to write about \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. specific trait terms; abstract trait terms

\*b. abstract traits terms; social roles

c. fewer trait terms; more trait terms

d. more negative trait terms; fewer negative trait terms

**Ans:** B

17. Self-enhancement is the tendency to \_\_\_\_\_\_ and is probably stronger in \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. see oneself in a positive way; Eastern cultures

\*b. see oneself in a positive way; Western cultures

c. see others in a negative way; Western cultures

d. see others in a positive light; Eastern cultures

**Ans:** B

# Chapter 6: Thinking

## Short answers

1. What are divergent and convergent thinking? Provide examples on how these relate to creativity.

Divergent thinking is a mental approach that takes many paths to solutions, as opposed to a single logical path to one best solution (which characterizes convergent thinking), and it is a key feature of creativity (Runco & Acar, 2012). For example, the scoring for the alternate uses task rewards divergent thinking with points for generating many different and original answers across various categories of use (Silvia et al., 2008). Divergent thought is helpful for creative solutions, and contrasts with the convergent thinking needed to solve problems with straightforward or single best answers.

For example, divergent thinking might help an architect consider novel designs for a new bridge. Later these designs might be tested with convergent thinking that applies formulas for calculating how much weight each bridge design can handle before collapsing. Recall that truly creative works must be both novel and useful. Divergent thinking is needed for the novelty, but some ‘solutions’ will later be dismissed for the bad ideas they are.

2. Describe the relationship between age and wisdom and provide relevant examples. Which other individual differences are associated with wisdom and to what extent?

 In essence, there are not clear and consistent age differences in wisdom measures across adulthood (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Brienza et al., 2017; Grossmann, 2017; Staudinger & Glück, 2011). To be clear, individual studies sometimes find age differences, but they tend to be small, both increasing and decreasing over the life span, or vary by topic and culture.

 On the other hand, if we compare wisdom to other kinds of cognitive processes, older people do seem especially resilient with wisdom. That is, memory and processing speed tend to decline with age; thus, the lack of similar decline in wisdom is telling. Wisdom likely suffers too with serious cognitive decline, and among older people there may be a mix of both the exceptionally wise and others who are losing that capacity. In addition, before making too much of small age effects in wisdom, we should mind the gap between real-world wisdom and the artificial tasks used to assess it (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Despite these cautions, most agree that wisdom requires more than the mere accumulation of years, and some older adults still lack wisdom.

 Beyond age, are there other individual differences more associated with wisdom? Of the big five traits, openness is most consistently and strongly correlated with measures of wisdom, and extraversion, agreeableness, stability and conscientiousness all have smaller positive correlations in a recent meta-analysis (Dong et al., 2023). Narrower personality characteristics such as emotion regulation, social intelligence, mindfulness, perspective taking, etc. also correlate with wisdom, though some of these characteristics begin to overlap with self-report measures of wisdom itself.

 General intelligence is also positively correlated with wisdom (Staudinger, Lopez, & Baltes, 1997). Although wisdom is seen as going beyond raw intellect – particularly in terms of practical applications – intelligence is often seen as a pre-condition of wisdom. Yet, intelligence and wisdom differ in important ways. For example, unlike intelligence, wisdom is typically associated with psychological well-being. The link goes back to Aristotle who saw practical wisdom as a master virtue and eudaimonia as about living a virtuous life. Contemporary research supports this notion by linking measures of wisdom and well-being, especially a sense of personal growth (Wink & Staudinger, 2016).

 Self-focus or ego-centric perspectives may impair wisdom. Hints of this are found when comparing cultural differences in individualism or power; wise reasoning seems more prevalent when these are lower (Grossmann, 2017).

3. What does Howard Gardner’s idea of ‘multiple intelligences’ entail? How are these useful in education? Please support your answers with relevant examples.

 For example, Howard Gardner has been influential among educators in suggesting the idea of ‘multiple intelligences’, emphasizing the distinctiveness of different abilities, rather than the commonalities (see Gardner & Moran, 2006). Many of the intelligences he proposes seem to easily fit within the hierarchy of general intelligence (e.g. linguistic, spatial and logical), but others may be more distinct (e.g. musical or bodily – as indicated by good balance; Visser, Ashton, & Vernon, 2006).

 In education, it can be useful to teach concepts in multiple ways so as to engage various abilities and thus produce a deeper understanding. This general truism contrasts slightly with the notion of learning styles, or the idea that different people will always learn best with particular kinds of instruction (e.g. visual learners vs. auditory learners – many different styles have been proposed). Although the notion of multiple intelligences implies different modes of learning, even Gardner has been critical of learning styles (Gardner, 2013). Moreover, research has not identified much benefit in teaching to individuals’ styles, that is, by matching instruction style to the person (Kozhevnikov, Evans, & Kosslyn, 2014). Instead, having a flexible strategy to teaching and learning seems to work best – different concepts and tasks will require different modes of thinking. For example, some information is best conveyed visually; trying to translate to an audio-only approach is unlikely to help anyone, even if that person has strong musical ability.

## Multiple choice

1. In decision-making, satisficing is characterized by \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. choosing the best option possible

\*b. choosing a reasonable – even if not optimal – option

c. being satisfied with the first option

d. never choosing at all

**Ans:** B

2. The tendency to maximize is associated with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. better decision-making (choosing best option)

b. faster decision-making

c. higher subjective well-being

\*d. lower subjective well-being

**Ans:** D

3. A broad approach to creativity considers \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. processes, products, persons and press

b. general intelligence

c. openness to experience, hierarchical intelligence and wisdom

d. positive emotions and diversity training

**Ans:** A

4. The ability to automatically block out irrelevant information is called \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. being on ‘autopilot’

\*b. latent inhibition

c. unconscious processes

d. mindfulness

**Ans:** B

5. Which of the following is an especially poor measure of creative products?

a. a count lifetime creative works

b. self-report questionnaires

\*c. the remote associates test

d. expert ratings

**Ans:** C

6. Tests of divergent thinking are positively correlated with which personality trait?

\*a. Openness to experience

b. Agreeableness

c. Emotional stability

d. Conscientiousness

**Ans:** A

7. Creativity can be facilitated by \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. helping people establish clear routines and sticking to them

\*b. pushing people out of their habitual ways of behaving

c. getting people to tap into negative emotions more often

d. setting strict deadlines

**Ans:** B

8. When straightforward answers are elusive, \_\_\_\_\_\_ can help a person understand and balance the trade-offs.

a. maximizing

b. decision-making

\*c. practical wisdom

d. inhibition

**Ans:** C

9. An appreciation of uncertainty is especially important to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. creativity

\*b. wisdom

c. intelligence

d. affective forecasting

**Ans:** B

10. Studies suggest that wise reasoning can be increased by \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. focussing on one’s own problems

\*b. considering another person’s problems

c. taking vitamin C tablets

d. living past the age of 85

**Ans:** B

11. Intelligence is best viewed as having a \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. hierarchical structure

b. predominantly genetic cause

c. specific base in mathematical abilities

d. specific base in linguistic abilities

**Ans:** A

12. General intelligence (‘g’) does an especially good job at predicting \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. the field in which someone will excel

b. performance on specific tasks

\*c. the magnitude of accomplishments

d. scores on personality measures

**Ans:** C

13. \_\_\_\_\_\_ represents the kind of things taught explicitly in schools.

a. General intelligence

\*b. Crystalized intelligence

c. Fluid intelligence

d. Emotional intelligence

**Ans:** B

14. \_\_\_\_\_\_ represents the abilities to perceive, understand and regulate emotions in an adaptive way.

a. General intelligence

b. Crystalized intelligence

c. Fluid intelligence

\*d. Emotional intelligence

**Ans:** D

15. Which of the following is the strongest predictor of academic achievement?

a. grit

b. happiness

\*c. intelligence

d. growth mindset

**Ans:** C

16. Affective forecasting studies suggest that people often \_\_\_\_\_\_ how much influence events will have on future \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. over-estimate; happiness

b. under-estimate; happiness

c. over-estimate; income

d. under-estimate; income

**Ans:** A

17. In Schkade and Kahneman’s (1998) study, participants from the Midwest guessed that people from California were happier than people like them from the Midwest because of \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. affective forecasting

b. habituation

\*c. the focussing illusion

d. the ‘grass is greener’ fallacy

**Ans:** C

# Chapter 7: Social and physical environments

## Short answers

1. What are the core differences between prosocial behaviour and altruism? Support your answer with relevant examples.

 Prosocial behaviour refers to anything that increases another’s well-being, such as helping, sharing or cooperation. If that behaviour also increases the actor’s well-being, it is still counts as prosocial – even if personal gain motivated the prosocial behaviour. For example, giving a gift to someone is a prosocial act whether or not it comes just before asking a big favour.

 Here, we can make a distinction with altruism, where actions benefit someone else, without clear personal benefit, or even at a potential cost to the actor. Given the many potential indirect benefits of prosocial behaviour (e.g. good moods, earned gratitude, reputation), it is difficult to know conclusively that an act is unambiguously altruistic. As such, the definition of altruism is commonly expanded to include prosocial behaviours that are performed without (conscious) regard to potential personal benefits, even if they may eventually accrue.

2. Name four aspects of a social situation that can promote cooperation.

 Allowing communication among people promotes cooperation

 Smaller groups tend to be more cooperative than larger groups

 Cooperative norms and knowing that similar others cooperate help promote prosocial choices

 Adding rewards for cooperation or punishments for noncooperation increases cooperation

 Respect from leaders and fair treatment within groups promotes cooperation

 Cooperation increases within a group when competing against another outgroup

3. Describe the notion of biophilia. How did it help early humans thrive? How does a fascination with unpleasant or dangerous aspects of nature fit with this idea?

 The notion of biophilia posits that humans have an innate emotional attraction other forms of life, to nature (Wilson, 1993).

 That is, humans evolved in natural environments, and our evolutionary history favoured people who developed strong bonds with and understanding of nature. Being attracted to lush greenery and the density of life around water, for example, meant that early humans were drawn to resource-rich places – good for survival.

 A fascination with unpleasant or dangerous aspects of nature fits with this idea too; the emotional bond is not always positive. For example, it is easier to condition a fear of snakes in people (and monkeys), compared to other objects, presumably because fear of snakes has been adaptive over mammals’ evolutionary history (Öhman & Mineka, 2003).

 Snakes also hold prominent places in art, religion, dreams, etc.; this fascination may connote the value of learning and teaching about environmental threats, driven by an evolutionarily shaped emotional link (Wilson, 1993). Snake fear is a clear and well-supported example of evolved preferences in the natural world; yet, most aspects of nature are pleasing. We see this theme in other areas (e.g. emotions, close relationships): the negative features grab attention, but the positive ones are far more common. As such, connecting with nature is typically associated with well-being.

## Multiple choice

1. Prosocial action directed towards genetic relatives is also known as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. empathy

b. competitive altruism

\*c. kin altruism

d. preservation

**Ans:** C

2. We are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour with people \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. who will be able to reciprocate

b. who are more distressed

c. who we know better

d. who are elderly

**Ans:** A

3. Improving one’s reputation through prosocial acts with no direct benefits is known as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. reciprocal altruism

\*b. competitive altruism

c. empathy-altruism

d. selfishness

**Ans:** B

4. In \_\_\_\_\_\_ most specifically, individuals must choose between maximizing immediate personal benefit or contributing to collective well-being.

a. reciprocal altruism

b. kin altruism

c. prosocial behaviour

\*d. social dilemmas

**Ans:** D

5. Creating a benefit that does not yet exist is a \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. common pool resource dilemma

b. an ethical decision

\*c. public goods dilemma

d. ‘take some’ dilemma

**Ans:** C

6. Cooperation is higher when the social dilemma is framed as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. an ethical decision

b. a business decision

c. a public good’s dilemma

d. a common pool resource dilemma

**Ans:** A

7. Changing the incentives of a dilemma also helps \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. people ignore the dilemma

b. change the dilemma from common to public, and vice-versa

\*c. change perceptions of social norms

d. people talk more about the dilemma

**Ans:** C

8. The term ‘intuitive prosociality’ describes our \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. unconscious desire to help ourselves

\*b. intuitive impulse to improve another person’s well-being

c. deliberate decision to improve another person’s well-being

d. intuitive impulse to help only others that can reciprocate

**Ans:** B

9. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is about perceiving things that are unexpected, profound or amazing.

\*a. Awe

b. Empathy

c. Altruism

d. Kindness

**Ans:** A

10. Environments that \_\_\_\_\_\_ are restorative for cognitive resources.

\*a. provide some stimulation while allowing attention to wander freely

b. stimulate emotions

c. are built as opposed to natural

d. allow for socializing as opposed to solitude

**Ans:** A

11. Strolling through a forest mindfully is called \_\_\_\_\_\_ and was developed by government to promote \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. forest bathing; the potential health benefits of nature

b. biophilia; connection to nature

c. connection to nature; prosocial behaviour

d. environmentalism; nature in urban areas

**Ans:** A

12. Biophilic design has been found to improve \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ by creating a sense of connection with nature.

a. empathy; awe

b. kindness; altruism

\*c. aesthetic appeal; human well-being

d. built environments; natural environments

**Ans:** C

13. If you were asked to have lunch with a tree, you are likely engaging with\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. a common pool resource dilemma

b. a public goods dilemma

\*c. nature informed therapy

d. kin altruism

**Ans:** C

14. Although researchers still debate the effects of virtual environments, they are likely more positive when they \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. promote social comparison

\*b. provide social interaction for marginalized people

c. target very young people

d. replace in-person socializing

**Ans:** B

# Chapter 8: Close relationships

## Short answers

1. Are there gender differences in the experience of love and romance? Support your answer with relevant examples.

 Researchers have rejected such dramatic claims of stark gender differences, seeing much more similarity and overlap between men and women in their data (Reis & Carothers, 2014). Yet, in her review of many studies, Fehr (2015) concluded that women often score somewhat higher on measures of companionate love, whereas gender differences are rarely found on measures of passionate love.

 There are indications that men may be the more romantic gender. For example, a series of studies found that men were more likely to say ‘I love you’ first in relationships, and also think about getting serious earlier than women (Ackerman, Griskevicius, & Li, 2011). On the other hand, men are also more interested in casual sex and having many partners (Schmitt et al., 2003; Schützwohl, Fuchs, McKibbin, & Shackelford, 2009). Even when such differences are found, it is important to keep in mind that they describe averages, with many individual men and women bucking the overall trends. Fortunately, it seems that men and women are both from Earth when it comes to love.

2. List and describe three things that facilitate the development of new close relationships.

 Social psychologists learned that simple proximity and exposure to other people predicted liking them (Bornstein, 1989). Of all the people in the world with whom you might develop close relationships, it is most often the people who are physically near and who you see frequently.

 Deeper relationships develop when people mutually share things. This applies to physical gestures; we tend to mimic people around us, and this mimicry indicates positive interactions (Lakin, Jefferis, Cheng, & Chartrand, 2003). For example, you might see a first date at a café, and, curiously, both people are leaning in, both with legs crossed, both with fingers resting lightly on their cheeks. This would be a good sign.

 Through conversations, deeper relationships develop as people disclose increasingly personal information. Indeed, the power of this process has been harnessed in the ‘fast friends’ lab procedure where strangers can become quite close after about 45 minutes (Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997).

 In the early stages of romantic relationships, similarity in background, interests, values and personality is also conducive to liking (Botwin, Buss, & Shackelford, 1997; Montoya, Horton, & Kirchner, 2008). The adage ‘opposites attract’ is generally not supported by research.

3. Describe and provide relevant examples of an active-constructive response, a passive-constructive response and a passive destructive response in partner communication.

 When Jesse shares the news with her partner, an active-constructive response would be something like, ‘That is wonderful! Do you know who your mentor will be? It sounds like you will be able to do some really exciting research there; tell me more!’ The active-constructive response shows interest and savours the good news.

 In contrast, a passive-constructive response would be much less enthusiastic, for example, a warm smile and, ‘good job, sweetie’. It is still positive, but does not engage deeply or prompt additional conversation. Destructive responses are more obviously negative. For example, in an active-destructive response, Jesse’s partner might say, ‘Oh jeez, I guess that means you will have to move away from all your friends. And the heavy workload there – it’s not like you’ll have time for friends anyway. Are you sure you can keep up?’ This response is active, but in taking good news and finding problems with it. Even when there are valid concerns, rushing to them first is unlikely to benefit the relationship.

## Multiple choice

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_ describes how separation from caregivers can produce problems later on in life.

a. Separation anxiety

\*b. Attachment theory

c. Socio-emotional theory

d. None of these

**Ans:** B

2. Listing and rating the most typical features of a concept without clear rules or boundaries is at the heart of the \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. experience sampling method

b. correlational method

c. experimental approach

\*d. prototype approach

**Ans:** D

3. Strong friendship is synonymous with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. companionate love

b. passionate love

c. attachment love

d. selfless love

**Ans:** A

4. The happiest, lasting relationships have high levels of both \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. passionate and companionate love

b. wealth and support from in-laws

c. sex and intense arguments

d. anxious and avoidant attachment styles

**Ans:** A

5. A study by Cohen, Janicki-Deverts, Turner, and Doyle (2015) found that people exposed to the cold virus became less ill if they \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. were treated by a medical professional

\*b. got more hugs

c. were given an oxytocin nasal spray

d. talked on the phone with a loved one

**Ans:** B

6. Broadly, attachment styles refer to the \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. combination of passionate love and companionate love in close relationships

b. anxiousness that people feel when they are separated from a loved one

c. calmness that people feel when they are close to a loved one

\*d. mental models or expectations that people have about close relationships

**Ans:** D

7. Low self-esteem, doubt and concerns that others will not be available when needed is characteristic of an \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. anxious attachment style

b. secure attachment style

c. avoidant attachment style

d. unbalanced attachment style

**Ans:** A

8. When people share good news with their partner through the process of \_\_\_\_\_\_, they are also more likely to experience greater \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. attachment; growth over time

\*b. capitalization; mood boosts

c. communication; attachment

d. love; companionate love

**Ans:** B

9. All the ways people provide assistance to others is also known as \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. sympathy

b. agreeableness

c. capitalization

\*d. social support

**Ans:** D

10. Self-expansion theory makes the assumptions that \_\_\_\_\_\_, and that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. people have deep motivation to grow; people can expand the self through romantic relationships

b. people are more likely to grow outside of romantic relationships; parents are responsible for implementing the motivation to grow

c. people are more likely to grow in romantic relationships with anxious attachments; these attachments provide hurdles necessary for learning and expansion

d. people who are more extraverted are more likely to be in romantic relationships; growth in romantic relationships necessitates consistent communication

**Ans:** A

11. The frequency of sexual activity in romantic relationships is \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. positively correlated with age

b. positively correlated with divorce

\*c. positively correlated with subjective well-being

d. positively correlated with anxious attachment

**Ans:** C

12. Indicating greater overlap in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ correlates positively with \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. Big five model measure; relationship satisfaction

b. empathy index measure; number of romantic partners

\*c. inclusion of other in self-measure; closeness and intimacy

d. future self-continuity measure; long-term relationship success

**Ans:** C

# Chapter 9: Stability and change

## Short answers

1. Describe one way that resilience can be assessed in research, and list a strength and weakness associated with the method that you chose. Support your answer with relevant examples.

 Even setting aside the complexity of stability and change in resilience, some tricky issues remain in fully describing it. The first is how to calibrate what counts as a good outcome.

 One (non-ideal) approach might be to define resilient responses as those which are better than average. We would first need to decide who is included in the relevant group (e.g. all widows, young widows, widows who were primary caregivers), then assess them and define the least distressed half as resilient. However, this arbitrarily assumes that 50% of people are resilient. Beyond arbitrary, you might also be surprised to learn that the 50% resilience rate is actually lower than research estimates using other methods (Galatzer-Levy, Huang, & Bonanno, 2018).

 For example, a study surveyed residents of New York City for symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) six months after the 2001 terrorist attack (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2006). Overall, about 65% of people reported zero or one symptom, and the researchers considered them resilient. About 6% reported high symptom levels, suggesting continued PTSD stemming from the attack, with the remaining 29% showing moderate or recovering levels. Although this study documents substantial suffering, it also suggests that the most common response was resilience in the face of a potentially traumatic event.

 Another way to find resilience is to track people over time, ideally with a measurement taken before the potentially traumatic event. This approach presents a challenge to researchers, yet dozens of studies have been able to measure people before and after adverse events. Many of these are studies of predictable events (e.g. military deployment, bereavement following illness), but others rely on luck, clever adjustments or good records.

 For example, comprehensive medical records in the Netherlands were used to examine children’s mental health before and after a major fireworks factory accident (more on that later; Dirkzwager, Kerssens, & Yzermans, 2006). In pre-post-event studies like this, changes over time can be used to sort people into groups. Understandably, some people respond with a significant increase in distress. Others, however, are quite stable, with low levels of distress before the event which remain similar through it and after it. These people are considered resilient for maintaining psychological heath despite difficult circumstances.

 Another challenge in characterizing resilience is deciding what, exactly, must go right to qualify.

 For example, if a chronically ill person has pervasive uncertainty about her purpose in life, but generally experiences pleasant moods, is she resilient? For practical reasons, individual studies typically consider only a small set of potentially relevant factors. Returning to the study of 2001 New Yorkers, many people seemed resilient on measures of PTSD, but perhaps they were still depressed or had substantially reduced life satisfaction – we simply do not know. Some critics argue that we cannot trust the high resilience rate estimates because there could always be unmeasured variables which would display problems (e.g. Infurna & Luthar, 2016). It is hard to dismiss this idea, and caution is warranted to avoid making too much of exact estimates for resilience rates. However, it also seems unlikely that research consistently measures the wrong things, and that substantial ill-being is hiding in those unmeasured factors. Most individual studies are too limited to make confident conclusions about psychological health broadly (complete resilience), but critiques become unfalsifiable if they appeal to an endless list of hidden or unmeasured possibilities.

2. How might objective and perceived post-traumatic growth promote good psychological health? Is it better to promote one or the other?

 For objective change over time, the question seems to answer itself. Growth is defined by increases in desirable characteristics such as strong interpersonal relationships, self-esteem and mastery; these are hallmarks of psychological health. Some studies also hint that actual growth is associated with less distress (Frazier et al., 2009). The primary limitation here is that actual growth may not extend across all potential areas of well-being simultaneously. Still, with little evidence of trade-offs across domains (e.g. mastery at the cost of spirituality), the actual growth seems like a real benefit.

 Turning to perceptions of growth and well-being, the answer is frustratingly ambiguous. The perception of growth is comforting in and of itself, and it connotes a subjective sense of well-being, at least in those growth domains. In addition, many individual studies found that perceptions of growth were associated with less distress and other desirable outcomes (Lechner et al., 2009; Linley & Joseph, 2004). In addition, perceived growth is associated with positive coping strategies, and can be viewed as part of those coping efforts (Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2014; Lechner et al., 2009). On the other hand, some studies find that perceptions of growth are associated with higher levels of distress.

 It seems plausible that the experience of distress might prompt perceptions of growth. To the extent that distress is the catalyst, we should expect that the most distressed people will feel like they changed the most. On the other hand, if perceptions of growth are genuinely helpful, distress should then fade with time. This seems to happen for some people (e.g. the spinal cord patients who found meaning had less depression over time, Davis & Novoa, 2013), but results differ across studies.

 Nonetheless, the current state of research suggests that trying to build actual strengths – rather than mere perceptions of increased strengths – has better potential to help people who have experienced trauma. Said another way, there is probably little value in trying to convince people that their lives are better because of traumatic experiences; yet, fostering actual strengths is obviously beneficial.

3. What is the ultimate goal of positive interventions? Knowing this, describe two limitations that typically qualify positive interventions’ success.

 The overall message is that positive interventions can work, but this does not mean that we have strong evidence for every individual tool in the collection. For example, the technique of using active-constructive responding is frequently mentioned in reviews (based on encouraging nonintervention research; see Chapter 8), but the only two studies that tested it as an intervention produced inconclusive results (Schueller, 2010; Woods, Lambert, Brown, Fincham, & May, 2015).

 In addition, when the results of many intervention studies are averaged, the degree of well-being change is relatively small, compared to control conditions. The potential upsides of widespread use and the relatively low cost of these interventions mean that reliable but small effects could still produce tremendous benefits. Still, dramatic boosts in happiness are not the norm.

 Moreover, as more time passes between the initial intervention and the follow-up tests, we see fewer studies, and among the studies that do exist, the size of the happiness boosts gets smaller. For example, writing a gratitude letter today is unlikely to make you happy a year from now. This may seem obvious; yet, the ultimate goal for positive interventions is to foster lasting gains in well-being. The more intensive interventions, such as those that involve direct contact with a counsellor and that involve weeks of (group) therapy, tend to produce larger and longer-lasting results. Such interventions are not the prototypical positive activities, but they are usually included in the meta-analyses that conclude successful well-being increases. We must be careful to avoid ascribing the effects of intensive interventions to trivial activities.

## Multiple choice

1. With much prior exposure to traumatic events, resilience is \_\_\_\_\_\_, on average.

\*a. lesser

b. greater

c. lesser for men and greater for women

d. greater for women and lesser for men

**Ans:** A

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_ predicts the completion of stressful tasks, and it includes elements of self-efficacy, emotion regulation, attention regulation and optimism.

a. Extraversion

b. Post-traumatic growth

\*c. Mental toughness

d. Self-esteem

**Ans:** C

3. A study by Seery, Holman, and Silver (2010) on predictors of resilience found that \_\_\_\_\_\_ of cumulative lifetime adversity (like divorce, natural disasters, and injury) were associated with the highest life satisfaction and the lowest distress.

a. high levels

\*b. moderate levels

c. low levels

d. the complete absence

**Ans:** B

4. Perceptions of growth often \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. focus more on the past

b. focus more on the future

c. mimic reality

\*d. differ from reality

**Ans:** D

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is defined by positive change following a major good event.

\*a. Post-ecstatic growth

b. Post-traumatic growth

c. Benefit finding

d. Meaning making

**Ans:** A

6. Even though well-being is fairly stable over time, happiness can improve if \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. people are content with their present levels of happiness

b. people imagine a happier future self

\*c. people invest effort in the goal of becoming more happy

d. people tell others they want to be happier

**Ans:** C

7. Positive interventions are designed to \_\_\_\_\_\_, rather than \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. treat dysfunction; boost happiness

\*b. boost happiness; treat dysfunction

c. keep happiness at a neutral level; increase happiness

d. boost happiness for short term; focus on long-term increases

**Ans:** B

8. Notwithstanding limitations to his methods, Michael Fordyce was among the first to show that happiness could be increased through instruction to \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. older adults

b. people with depression

\*c. students

d. working clinical psychologists

**Ans:** C

9. With positive interventions, people who \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_ typically benefit more with longer-lasting increases in well-being.

a. are assigned; stick with this one activity

\*b. actively seek out variety; stick with activities

c. seek out short-term pleasure; spend more time by themselves

d. read about happiness; observe their own behaviour

**Ans:** B

10. The heart of the positive activity model is labeled \_\_\_\_\_\_, which describes the match of an activity’s features to an individual’s personality and circumstances.

\*a. person-activity fit

b. well-being fit

c. personality-happiness fit

d. activity-circumstance fit

**Ans:** A

11. Where would we expect a gratitude intervention to be most effective?

a. Korea

\*b. USA

c. Ghana

d. there is no reason to expect differences across nations

**Ans:** B

12. Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) teaches \_\_\_\_\_\_ to develop an engaged yet non-judgemental approach to present circumstances.

a. patience

b. passiveness

\*c. mindfulness

d. empathy

**Ans:** C

13. Overall, resilience training is viewed as \_\_\_\_\_\_ mental health care.

a. short-term

b. prescriptive

\*c. preventative

d. highly effective

**Ans:** C

# Chapter 10: Looking forward

## Short answers

1. Describe the general idea of SMART goals and briefly describe each key feature.

 Much accumulated knowledge about good goals is synthesized in the acronym SMART (attributed to George Doran originally and since widely adapted and adopted). That is, goals tend to work better when they are:

 Specific: be precise

 Measurable: monitoring progress can help you learn along the way and help achieve goals (Harkin et al., 2016)

 Attainable: recall that difficult goals improve performance, but commitment will wane if they are unreasonable (cf. Swannn et al., 2023)

 Relevant: ensure that the goal is leading in a direction you truly want to go (i.e. valued, intrinsically motivated or part of a larger plan)

 Timebound: having long-term aspirations is great, but set interrum (specific) goals that have a more modest timeline; you can always add a new goal upon accomplishment

2. Why are habits important to goals? How can habits be developed to help meet goals? Support your answers with relevant examples.

 Understanding habits is important to goals because people often have goals to break undesirable habits or develop new habits. Indeed, creating a new habit can serve a goal well by making desirable behaviours occur without thought, after the new habit is established. Many of the useful strategies for goal pursuit reduce the need for willpower; habits are at the pinnacle of this principle. Developing habits takes time and repetition, and during this period the cued behaviour is rewarded; however, once the habit is formed, the cue-induced behaviour can be rewarding on its own (Neal et al., 2006). For example, eating from a bowl of candy at the laundromat starts off as rewarding (yum!); yet once a habit of eating there is established, you might find yourself doing it even when full or with flavours you do not like much. The candy bowl is the cue; your eating has become automatic. Said another way, when habits exist, people’s intentions are largely irrelevant (Webb & Sheeran, 2006). This can become a problem when intentions differ from habits (e.g. wanting to avoid sugar, stop smoking, check email less often). When trying to break a habit, it is useful to identify the cue for undesirable behaviour. This cue might then be avoided if possible, or alternatively, implementation intentions can help effortfully replace the response, IF [habit cue] THEN [alternative behaviour]. Consider adding a reward to go along with the alternative behaviour and repeat regularly to foster a new habit.

 It is also possible to create a new habit, rather than merely replace a bad habit. The potential for new habits is greatest when you can identify a specific, regular cue that can signal the behaviour and that can be consistently rewarded (at least at first). In these circumstances the benefits of a desirable habit may even outweigh some motivational costs. For example, motivation research shows that rewarding people, for example, by paying them, for behaviours that they already want to do can reduce motivation once the external rewards stop (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). In essence, their reasons for the behaviour shift from intrinsic to the extrinsic financial rewards. However, recent studies suggest that payments can be used strategically to develop new habits, and those new habits still foster the desired behaviour. For example, researchers randomly assigned some people to be paid to exercise at the gym twice per week for a month, and compared them to people in a control group who were not paid for regular gym attendance (Charness & Gneezy, 2009). Perhaps obviously, the payments increased gym attendance while they were being doled out. More importantly, the paid participants continued to use the gym at higher rates after payments stopped as tracking continued even months later. Said another way, for participants who did not go to the gym before this study, the payments seemed successful in generating a new and lasting habit. Of course, this study does not directly compare intrinsic motivation to new habits, but it does suggest that bribery can be successful in inducing new habits. It may be difficult for you to find someone to pay you to reach your personal goals, but perhaps you can put your intrinsic motivation (and other strategies) to work in service of developing a new habit. Payments are not the only rewards. Moreover, the repetition (vs. financial incentive) is likely more important to habit formation. Another study found that people developed a gym habit without payment, but estimated that it took four visits per week for six weeks (Kaushal & Rhodes, 2015). In sum, if you have a goal that is amenable to habit formation, try committing to a regular schedule for a month to see if this is enough to make it stick. You may also find that it is easier to get started with a one-month commitment, compared to a lifelong plan.

3. What are the main contributions of positive psychology when it comes to understanding emotions and subjective well-being?

 Positive psychology’s most useful contribution has been to focus more attention on positive topics. At the time the movement began, people’s typical (pleasant) experience was largely neglected by mainstream psychology. This is most evident when it comes to emotions. The classic theories were developed to explain unpleasant emotions, and an early focus on facial expressions meant that pleasant emotions were mostly ignored. Today, the list of positive emotions roughly equals that of negative emotions.

 Moreover, considering positive emotions more deeply has challenged old theories and definitions of emotion. The broaden and build model has provided space to study the varieties and purposes of positive emotions. Although some work related to the model has required revision (Fredrickson, 2013), the core idea that positive emotions broaden cognition and build resources has been exceptionally generative.

 More importantly, our knowledge about subjective well-being has exploded since the positive psychology movement began, and it had a pretty good head start even then. In particular, the Gallup World Poll has provided amazing data – representative samples of planet Earth across many years – and thereby provided useful information about the societal characteristics that contribute to well-being. Governments are increasingly interested in tracking national well-being, and in crafting policy to promote it. Mixing positive psychology with politics carries some risk, but findings seem to support policies that can appeal across ideologies. Happiness tracks freedom, clean environments, wealth and social supports. In addition, positive psychology has made a strong start in developing techniques (interventions) that can meaningfully boost well-being over time. That said, plenty of work remains for researchers and practitioners to further hone our knowledge of what works best and for whom.

## Multiple choice

1. Grit is strongly positively associated with the big five trait of \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. conscientiousness

b. extraversion

c. agreeableness

d. emotional stability

**Ans:** A

2. People who have \_\_\_\_\_\_ are less motivated to put effort into changing themselves.

a. growth mindsets

b. high self-compassion

\*c. fixed mindsets

d. high self-efficacy

**Ans:** C

3. Pursuing \_\_\_\_\_\_ is both difficult to stick with over time and less rewarding.

a. intrinsic goals

b. specific goals

\*c. extrinsic goals

d. personal goals

**Ans:** C

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_ helps describe the characteristics of goals that produce optimal performance in structured domains such as school and workplaces.

a. Self-determination theory

\*b. Goal setting theory

c. Broaden and build theory

d. Performance theory

**Ans:** B

5. Without \_\_\_\_\_\_, goals lose their ability to motivate.

a. extrinsic incentives

b. other people

c. a positive outlook

\*d. commitment

**Ans:** D

6. Successful goal pursuit improves when \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. people use implementation intentions

b. organizations decrease employees’ intrinsic motivation

c. people make the goal to ‘do their best’

d. people think of their goals as enemies

**Ans:** A

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is important for habit formation.

a. Motivation

b. Spacing

\*c. Repetition

d. Personality

**Ans:** C

8. When trying to break a habit, it is useful to identify the \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the undesirable behaviour.

a. motivation

b. intention

\*c. cue

d. mindset

**Ans:** C

9. Most practicing positive psychologists \_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. have a PhD in positive psychology specifically (vs. other areas)

\*b. have some post-graduate positive psychology training

c. learned all they need to know from the textbook in this course

d. took a written exam to quality as a positive psychologist

**Ans:** B

10. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is a hallmark of science because it demonstrates when a study is \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. Replication; repeatable

b. Publication; useful

c. Peer review; true

d. Statistical significance; false

**Ans:** A

11. \_\_\_\_\_\_ re-tests the basic idea of an original study, but intentionally changes certain aspects of the procedure.

a. Direct replication

\*b. Conceptual replication

c. Creative replication

d. Elaboration

**Ans:** B

12. \_\_\_\_\_\_ is a statistical term that represents findings that appear true when in reality, they are false.

a. Publication bias

b. Replication crisis

\*c. False-positive

d. True-negative

**Ans:** C

13. Before data is collected, a study’s procedure and analyses are planned and recorded with a \_\_\_\_\_\_.

\*a. pre-registration

b. ledger

c. p-hack

d. replication procedure

**Ans:** A