

**Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life**  
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**Positive Psychology: First and Second Wave**  
**Lecture - 10**  
**Using Stories to Understand Optimal Experiences**

Namaste, welcome to the 3rd session which is titled as Positive Psychology and Introduction. In the second section we discussed about the nature of positive psychology and how it can be studied in integration with the yoga and mindfulness related methods, how it is integrated in this course, and why it is important to study both of these in a course on self management and career management.

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Session 3:  
Positive  
Psychology: An  
Introduction

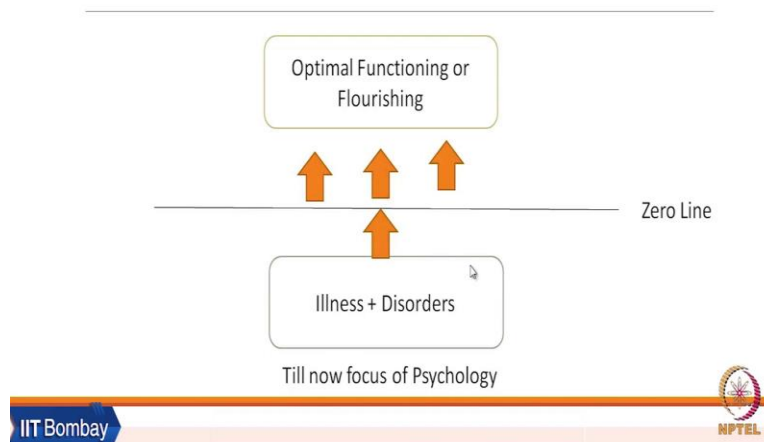
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Today's session is primarily focused to give an introduction to the field of positive psychology and also pointing out how it is applied in the different streams like management, R and D or tourism management, and what are the recent advances in the field of positive psychology.

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### Positive Psychology: Moving beyond the 'Zero Line'



If you recall in our previous discussion, we looked at how after World War II psychology and psychological research was mostly focused on the illness and disorders. It was the demand at the time, as when it was started because the major mandate for psychology was to work with the other health professionals and help people and war veterans to get rehabilitated psychologically.

So, attain an ordinary state of consciousness, attain a normal way of life was the objective of the field of psychology. But then there was a recognition that there is a lot in life other than being normal, there are many great qualities which defines which makes us true human beings and that was the call to look at not only how to attain the normal state of life.

But it is about researching and knowing more about optimal functioning or flourishing of the human being. And that resulted into the major advances in the field of positive psychology.

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## A Story in your life

Imagine the day when you left home to pursue higher education, both your parents were skeptical in sending you outside, far away from home. They were constantly in dilemma, thinking if they are making the right decision, whether their son/daughter will study well and live up to the standards of the parent's expectations. When your parents are amidst doubts and dilemmas, exactly in that moment, you take charge of the situation. You sit beside your parents, pacify them, give them **hope** that you will not do anything that hampers your study, degrades the reputation of your family. Rather you will strive to bring pride and honor to the family. You also assure them that irrespective of your busy schedule, you will call them once a day to update about your wellbeing as well as ensure that they are doing well too.

\*\*\*Can you relate the story with your life?\*\*\*

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What do I mean by optimal experiences? We would like to look at these things through certain stories. So, imagine the day when you left home to pursue higher education or you left home for major camp and development program. Both your parents were skeptical in sending you outside far away from home. They were constantly in a dilemma thinking if they are making the right decision, whether their son or daughter will study well and live up to the standards of the parents expectations.

When your parents are amidst doubts and dilemmas, exactly in that moment you take charge of situation. You sit besides your parent you pacify them, give them hope that you will not do anything that hampers your study or degrades the reputation of your family. Rather you will strive to bring pride and honor to the family. You also assure them that irrespective of your busy schedule you will call them once a day to update about your well-being as well as ensure that they are doing well too.

Can you relate this story with your life or the life of the people, your siblings or your friends around you. And please look at the highlighted word hope. In the difficult time, in the time of indecision, in the time of dilemma it is the hope which has brought light to the hearts of your parents and to yourself.

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Another story

Think of teachers, neighbors, friends, relatives who spent time and effort to make you learn new things, imbibe good qualities or even made extra efforts for your personal or professional growth. In such moment what do you feel? Grateful.

(\*\*Can you relate with your life\*\*)

In our everyday life, there are many such instances that allows us to identify and apply Positive Psychology interventions that makes our life flourish and worth living.

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Let us look at another story and different people will have different characters and different situations coming to their mind, coming to their memory when reading about this incident or this provocation. So, think about a teacher or teachers, neighbors or friends or relatives, who spend time and effort to make you learn new things, who helped you to imbibe some good qualities or even made extra effort for your personal or professional growth.

Think about those. I requested in the last session that please keep pen and pencil in front of you. And please keep writing about it, think about the characters, think about the people. Reflect from the childhood your school days, your higher secondary school days, your college days, the days in your professional life and think about those people who have spent time and effort to make you a better person or make you a better professional or make you a better student.

Write their names; write the place where you met them, recall some of the most memorable incidents of your interaction with them. Try to see that as it happened at that time. While doing that what is the emotion coming to your mind? This emotion we all know is the feeling of being grateful. So, in everyday life, there are such instances that allow us to identify and apply positive psychology interventions and that make our life flourish and worth living.

Another experiment you can try, you can pause this lecture. Look at the person closest to you at this moment, think about a good quality of that person, think about his special his or her special skill his or her special quality his or her special positive attitude. Think about it, note it down read it and if you think so, you can edit it, rephrase it, make it appropriate based on your understanding and why not just call this person, go to this person and say that so and so.

I am taking this course on yoga and positive psychology and as a part of the assignment I wish to appreciate you for your this particular quality. If you are a teacher, you can carry out this exercise in the classroom. You can ask people to appreciate each other, give the appreciation, first write down the appreciation about the person sitting besides him or her and then give these slips and exchange these slips.

And please notice how it feels like, how it changes our energy levels, how these interactions bring warmth's in the relationships, even maybe for some few moments. So, we can see that we can probably we all are using positive psychology intervention in day to day life. In this course we will try to understand the science and art behind it and also using these things more consciously and more strongly.

So, in order to understand it even better, how the shift in the psychology took place we can take two another incidences. At this stage it is important to distinguish, how the field our branch of knowledge which focuses on well-being is bound to be different from or bound to look at different variables, which are looked at in a field which is focused on treating mental illness.

So, we are trying to understand this process, again by two caselets. The first caselet is of Rahul a fictitious character, but not very difficult to find a character like Rahul around all of us. So, Rahul is 40 year old technology strategist he is a B Tech graduate with management degree from a renowned institution. He handles a team of 15 associates, year on year basis the team manages to reach the targets.

But Rahul hardly takes leave or goes for vacation, nor he grants leave to his team members. He also skips lunch, rather he prefers to utilize his break in checking e-mails and replying to the clients. Sometimes his colleagues see him with his forehead pasted on his palms, cradling his head

as if thoughts are weighing him down, his team interaction is also not very pleasant and often limited to delegation of task and activities.

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## Shift in Focus: Positive Psychology

Treating mental illness is not same as promoting well being

### Treating mental illness

Rahul is a 40 year old Technology Strategist. He is a Btech graduate with a Management degree from a renowned institute. He handles a team of 15 Associates. Year on year basis, the team manages to reach the targets. Rahul hardly takes leave or goes for vacation, nor he grants leave to his team members. He also skips lunch, rather ,he prefers to utilize his break in checking emails and replying to the clients. Sometimes his colleagues see him with his forehead pasted to his palms ,cradling his head as if thoughts are weighing him down. His team interaction is also very poor and often limited to delegation of tasks and activities. He is known as a 'grouch manager' on the floor. Rahul is unaware of the situation. Rahul's immediate manger is able to see the stress on his face for many years and in one appraisal, he finally decides to send him on a forced paid leave for two weeks. Rahul makes up his mind and takes clinical help in which he is diagnosed with acute stress, anxiety and depression. The doctor also gives a verdict stating, at the moment Rahul is unfit to continue with his day to day chores and puts him on Psychotropic drugs for the next four months.

What can you infer from Rahul's story?

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Naturally he is known as the grouch manager on the floor Rahul is unaware of the situation. Rahul's immediate manager is able to see the stress on his face for many years and in one appraisal, he finally decides to send him on a forced paid leave for two weeks. Rahul makes up his mind takes the clinical help in which he is diagnosed with acute stress anxiety and some signs of depression.

The doctor gives a verdict stating at the moment Rahul is unfit to continue with his day to day chores and put him on a psychotropic drugs.

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## Shift in Focus: Positive Psychology

Treating mental illness is not same as promoting well being

### Treating mental illness

Rahul is a 40 year old Technology Strategist. He is a Btech graduate with a Management degree from a renowned institute. He handles a team of 15 Associates. Year on year basis, the team manages to reach the targets. Rahul hardly takes leave or goes for vacation, nor he grants leave to his team members. He also skips lunch, rather ,he prefers to utilize his break in checking emails and replying to the clients. Sometimes his colleagues see him with his forehead pasted to his palms ,cradling his head as if thoughts are weighing him down. His team interaction is also very poor and often limited to delegation of tasks and activities. He is known as a 'grouch manager' on the floor. Rahul is unaware of the situation. Rahul's immediate manger is able to see the stress on his face for many years and in one appraisal, he finally decides to send him on a forced paid leave for two weeks. Rahul makes up his mind and takes clinical help in which he is diagnosed with acute stress and anxiety.

What can you infer from Rahul's story?

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Naturally Rahul is unaware of the situation, but Rahuls immediate manager is able to see the stress on his face. And for many years this is obvious to him, in one of the appraisal manager finally decides to send him on the forced leave for two weeks. Rahul make up; makes up his mind and takes also clinical help in which he is diagnosed with acute stress and anxiety.

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Your answer can be any of these

- Rahul is performing in an auto-pilot mode.
- Rahul is stressed.
- Rahul's colleagues are not happy with him.
- Rahul's mental and physical health is at stake.
- Rahul is unaware of his situation.
- Rahul can face an emergency alert at anytime.
- Rahul needs immediate attention.

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So, what do we infer from Rahul's story? We can infer that Rahul is performing in an autopilot mode, obviously he is stressed out. Rahul's colleague most likely they are not happy working with him. Rahul's mental and physical health both are artistic and we can also infer that mental and physical health are deeply connected.

Unfortunately we can also infer that Rahul is unaware of the severity of the situation. If this continues for long time, he can face emergency alert at any time because the stress and anxiety can become more severe and long term stress and anxiety may result into more serious ailment like hypertension, heart diseases, indigestion and many others.

So, we can also infer that Rahul needs immediate attention. And in this immediate attention we most likely the counsellor or the health professional or a coach who helps Rahul to see the situation and get out of it most likely will start the conversation about what is not pleasant, what is not welcoming, what is pathological in his dispositions and how it is being perceived by others.

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## Shift in Focus: Positive Psychology

### Promoting Mental Well-being

Savita is a 50 year old Senior Marketing Manager. She heads a team of 10 Marketing associates who have a global clientele. Savita has no fixed working hours and sometimes we see her working even on public holidays. Every month, Savita and her team is given fresh targets to achieve. We also know that she has a family comprising of husband and two children. So far, the leadership meetings we had, we always noticed Savita's **cheerful face**. Infact, on the floor, she is known as '**a woman who is always smiling**'. Among her team member, she is known as an **empathetic leader** who always lends quality time and a patient ear. On probing further, we came to know that last month the team could not adhere to their targets but still in the meeting, Savita looked so **confident and resilient of the failure**. We remember, how she **owned the failure** and emphasized upon the areas of improvement, rather than brooding upon the failure or playing the blame game. We got little curious about her **ever cheerful attitude** and hence delved deeper into her **lifestyle**. We found that every morning Savita sets aside a **time for herself**, which she calls '**me time**'. It lasts for an hour, in which she purely **works upon her psychological and physical well being**. She engages in meditation, yoga, journaling. She also prepares **food** which mostly constitutes of raw green vegetables and fruits. She has been doing this for many years now. We are really amazed to have Savita in our organization whose presence inspires and motivates all of us.

What can you infer from Savita's story?

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This story is of one and another fictitious character Savita. Savita is a 50 year old Senior Marketing Manager. She heads a team of 10 marketing associates who have global clientele. Savita has no fixed working hours and sometimes we see her working even on public holidays.



Every month Savita and her team is given fresh targets to achieve, we also know that she has a family comprising of husband two children. So far, the leadership meeting we had we always notice Savitas cheerful face. In fact, on the floor she is known as women who is always smiling.

Among her team members, she is known as an emphatic leader who always lends quality time and patient ear. On probing further we came to know that last month the team could not adhere to their targets. But still in meeting Kavita looked so confident and resilient of the failure, we remember how she owned a failure and emphasized upon the areas of improvement, rather than brooding upon the failure or playing the blame game.

We found little curious about her ever cheerful attitude and hence delve deeper into her lifestyle. We found that every morning Savita sets aside a time for herself, which she calls me time. It lasts for an hour, in which she purely works upon her psychological and physical well being. She engages in meditation, yoga, journaling, reflection. She also prepares food, which mostly constitute of raw green vegetables and fruits. She has been doing this for many years now.

We are really amazed to have Savita in our organization whose presence, inspires and motivates all of us. So, looking at this caselet you can understand, this is the account given by one of the senior colleagues of Savita. What you can infer about Savita and what you can infer from this story about well being.

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## Shift in Focus: Positive Psychology

Your answer can be any of these



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We can infer that Savita is mindful and whatever she does, she radiates positive energy. Savita's colleagues feel happy being around her and being working with her. And Savita takes care of her overall well being, positive psychology focuses on such characteristics and helps people to inculcate these and enhance these characteristics.

For many years, we had enough knowledge; we have substantial knowledge about stress, anxiety, depression. But we did not have much knowledge about positive attitudes, about courage, about well-being, about friendliness, about love, about following a discipline. We did not have much idea and positive psychology looks at these variables.