“Happiness” is commonly defined as a state of well-being or pleasurable experience, but this notion of happiness is only a small part of positive psychology.

According to Seligman (2002), positive psychology covers 3 main areas: positive emotions, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. These can be summarised as;

**Positive Emotion** - contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future. A large part of experiencing these emotions is choosing to do so. Begin making a choice to be open-minded and letting in moments of inspiration, joy, and interest, while working to cultivate hope for the future and gratitude for the present. The top 10 Positive Emotions are;

- **Joy** - comes from delightful and cherished experiences, and raises our well-being where we feel light and vibrant.
- **Gratitude** - can revolve around anything you feel great appreciation for.
- **Serenity** - comes from those moments of stillness and calm where you can just “be” in the present moment.
- **Interest** - It’s a state of intrigue and wonder, where you want to know more.
- **Hope** - It’s knowing our current problems aren’t permanent and that the future is still promising despite tough circumstances.
- **Pride** - Emanates from a sense of purpose and meaning in our accomplishments, and offers an increase in confidence to expand the belief in our potential to do greater things.
- **Amusement** - Amusement helps us build connections with others.
- **Inspiration** - Amazing feats of intellect, strength, and agility can lead to inspiration. A moment of inspiration draws us in and really stands out as an instant of excellence.
- **Awe** - feeling wonder and reverence toward something extremely powerful and admired.
- **Love** - a feeling of strong affection and personal attachment, where we have a very positive feeling of connection toward another person.

**Positive Individual Traits** - strengths and virtues, such as the capacity for love and work, courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, curiosity, integrity, self-knowledge, moderation, self-control, and wisdom.

**Positive Institutions** - meaning and purpose as well as the strengths that foster better communities, such as justice, responsibility, civility, parenting, nurturance, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, purpose, and tolerance.

**EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY TOOLS TO ENHANCE WELLBEING**

- 3 good things - Before going to bed write about 3 good things that happened that day;
- Best possible self - visualise and write down what it would be like in the future, once all your dreams and goals were fulfilled;
- Counting acts of kindness - note how many times you have observed others being kind either to you or others.
- Identifying and using strengths - Identify your strengths and try to use at least one of your strengths in a new way, every day for a week.

**Recommended Readings:**

*Flourish*, Martin E.P Seligman, 2011

*Being Happy*, Tal Ben-Shahar, 2010

*Positivity*, Barbara Fredrikson, 2010

*Peace is Every Step*, Thich Nhat Hanh, 1992