

## Module: Positive Perception



### In a nutshell:

Positive perception signifies the awareness of positive information and events. From an evolutionary perspective, people are innately prone to attend to negative information around the environment for the sake of avoiding danger and securing survival. Although negative perception may enhance survival from an evolutionary perspective, an ability to perceive positive life attributes is equally important to one's well-being. Positive perception can be enhanced and strengthened via daily practices. Habit building on attending to positive things facilitates positive perception in life.

### Scientific Facts:

Research study reveals that people who are over vigilant to surrounding threat and fail to disengage from negative stimuli show more anxiety and depression (MacLeod et al., 2002). This also implies a higher susceptibility to the development of anxiety and depression (Ellenbogen & Schwartzman, 2009). Besides, individuals with anxiety disorders are characterized by higher sensitivity to aversive stimuli and exhibited tendency to attentional bias on the negative (Koster, Verschuere, Crombez, & Van Damme, 2005; MacLeod, Mathews, & Tata, 1986; Watson & Clark, 1984).

Research among college students also suggests that students with an attentional bias towards negative stimuli together with induction of negative mood can predict their persistent low mood 7 weeks later if the students encounter negative life stressors over the studied period. In addition, college students who are slow in recovering from negative mood are also more vulnerable to fall into dysphoria (mild persistent depressive mood) when assessed 7 weeks later (Beevers & Carver, 2003).

On the contrary, individuals with attentional training or preference on positive information illustrate association with lower level of anxiety towards stressors as well as higher positive affectivity and optimism (Grafton, Ang, & Macleod, 2012; Taylor et al., 2011; Mauer & Borkebau, 2007; Segerstrom, 2001). In the study of Grafton, Ang and Macleod (2012), attentional training on positive perception is found to be causally related to the tendency of positive affection.

## Exercise:

### *Blessing Journal*

Feeling stressed and yearning for an escape from the negative feeling? Being thankful is a way out.

Gratitude (A grateful heart) is found to be a powerful yet inexpensive antidote to stress and the negative emotion. Being grateful for things happened in daily life can not only reduce hopelessness, but also enhance happiness and optimism. Daily record of the grateful note facilitates the development of positive perception.

To experience the miraculous chemistry of gratitude, start now!

Close your eyes and rewind.

Return to every single scene of today, right from the time you getting off from bed in the morning till the very present.

Revisit what you have seen, experienced, walked through and accomplished.

Uncover and write down 3 things that you are thankful for today. It doesn't have to be big. Small things like having a seat on school bus can also be a blessing. Make use of the media, including words, audio, videos, photos, drawings, emoji and stickers to capture and collect the beauty hidden in your life.

There you go. Time for 'blessing' hunt. Enjoy!

### *Mood Report (Research)*

Believe it or not, life is bittersweet.

Stress and suffering is transient.

Hang in there. And you will see the blessing in disguise.

Can't believe it? Let's research on this!

1. Record your mood daily in the calendar by using numbers (rating 0 – 10)/colors/patterned patch/Emoji 😊
2. Review your overall mood in 4 and 8 weeks.
3. 4 or 8 weeks later, the report may probably show
  - patterned patch: composition of different patterned patch

- colors: a colorful piece of art
- Emoji: collection of various Emoji

What do these imply?

All these are reminding you that life is not a deadly straight line, a single patterned patch. Neither is it an art in boring color, nor constantly in a mono-mood.

BUT

Life is vibrant and wonderful!

Work on your own mood report and check this out!

## References

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## 課題：正向感知

### 簡介：

正向感知所指的是一個人面對正向訊息和事件的注意力。縱然人生充滿美好，但為了避免危險和保障生命安全，人們天生對周遭環境中負面的訊息尤其關注。雖然如此，對日常正面事物的留心 and 關注對心靈健康同樣重要。而正向感知是可以通過每日的行為和訓練加強的。建立注視正向事物的習慣正好有助提高正向感知的能力。

### 科學實証：

研究報告發現對環境威脅過度警覺並難以從負面因素抽離的人士有較多焦慮及抑鬱情緒 (MacLeod et al., 2002)。這同時顯示他們患上焦慮症及抑鬱症的機會較高。此外，對反感的事物非常敏感及偏向注視負面事情亦是患有焦慮症人士其中一項主要特徵 (Koster, Verschuere, Crombez, & Van Damme, 2005; MacLeod, Mathews, & Tata, 1986; Watson & Clark, 1984)。

一項有關大學生的研究亦預測到當生活遇上壓力時，帶著負向偏向和負面情緒的學生在之後的 7 個星期將會持續地處於情緒低落的狀態。而且負面情緒恢復得較慢的大學生，在 7 星期後的評估亦發現他們較易煩躁不安，即有輕度但持續的抑鬱情緒 (Beevers & Carver, 2003)。

相反地，接受過正向事物注意訓練的人在面對外來壓力時，不但焦慮較少，而且表現得更樂觀，並顯示出較高的正面情感 (Grafton, Ang, & Macleod, 2012; Taylor et al., 2011; Mauer & Borkenau, 2007; Segerstrom, 2001)。在 Grafton、Ang 和 Macleod (2012) 的研究中更證實正向事物注意訓練和正向情感之因果關係。

### 練習：

#### 感恩日記

壓力爆煲，渴望逃離負面情緒的困擾？出口就在感恩的心。

感激之情是壓力強大的對手，也是不費金銀的壓力解藥。在日常生活中凡事感恩不但能減少絕望的感覺，而且能提升快樂和樂觀指數。每天記下感恩點滴，正是發展正向感知的秘訣。

現在就親身體驗一下感激之情的神奇作用！

閉上眼睛，回帶，重訪今天每一個片段。

由早上起牀到現在這一刻，再次重溫所看到遇到的、走過做過的，記下 3 項你為此而感恩的事。不一定是大事。小事如在校車上找到座位也可以是祝福。盡用文字、錄音、錄影、相片、圖畫、表情符號，甚至貼紙將你生命中的美好記錄下來，好好收藏。

尋寶時間開始。請盡情享受！

### 心情報告

人生是苦樂參半的。你相信嗎？

壓力和困苦轉瞬即逝。

只要堅持下去，你就會看到荊棘中的祝福。

難以置信？試一下以下研究！

1. 利用分數/顏色/不同樣色的圖案/表情符號把你每天的心情記錄在日曆上。
2. 四或八星期後，創造你獨有的心情報告。
3. 四或八星期後，你的報告正告訴你：
  - 布碎：由不同花樣組成的百家布
  - 顏色：七彩顏色的圖畫
  - 表情符號：折然不同的表情系列

這都在暗示些什麼？

它們都在告訴你人生並不是一條硬繃繃的直線、一幅單調的花樣圖案、一張色彩沉悶的藝術品，更不是持續地臉如死灰地活著。

人生是精采多變而且充滿活力！

現在就開始你的心情研究，印證你的精采人生！