

**Positive Organizational Scholarship, Positive Psychology and Happiness have recently been the subject of a Summit and various press articles. Below are summarised notes from those areas.**

(For an earlier, brief introduction to Positive Organizational Scholarship, Positive Psychology and Happiness refer to: <http://www.amandahorne.com.au/pdf/Feb2005PowerOfPositivity.pdf> )

#### **4<sup>th</sup> International Positive Psychology Summit (October 2005)**

I attended the summit earlier this month, which was held at the Gallup Organization's headquarters in Washington D.C. Presenters included around 40 academics, professionals, executives and practitioners, including the leading people behind the field of Positive Psychology. Below, brief notes from just some of those presentations:

*Jim Clifton, CEO and Chairman, The Gallup Organization:* Positive people are "engaged people"; stronger immune systems, fewer sick days, medical costs; maximizing strengths results in increased confidence; managers and bosses should aim to care about their people as individuals.

*Brad Anderson, CEO, Best Buy:* Focus on employees' talents and strengths, their ideas, passions and interests. Even disaffected staff on verge of being fired can demonstrate 'turn around' behaviour when a strengths-based approach to management is used. Structure jobs to allow people to thrive. Managers' roles are about enabling this to happen.

*Ellen Langer, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University (USA):* On 'mindfulness': noticing new things, creating new distinctions, sensitive to context; results in better health and happiness; more creative; impacts on people around you, is contagious; mindlessness is being trapped in a single perspective.

*Tom Wright, Professor of Organizational Behaviour, University of Nevada (USA):* On wellbeing and the organisation; connections between wellbeing and staff retention; what is the responsibility of the organisation in developing the wellbeing of its staff; happy worker is a productive worker; broaden and build model provides helpful framework.

*Ronald Fry: Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour, Case Western Reserve University (USA):* On the Appreciative Inquiry process, and its application in large organisations such as the US Navy and British Airways; "Organisations are not problems to be solved, they are centres of relationships connected to infinite capacity and strengths"; build resilience, creativity, productivity; positive change that extends beyond the original problem which needed 'fixing'.

*Alex Linley, School of Psychology, University of Leicester (UK):* On applying positive psychology in practice; increasing role of organisations in providing meaning for employees; the workplace is a place where achievement and wellbeing is facilitated; the need for help people to be strengths-focused, happiness-focused and goal oriented.

*Ed Deci, Professor of Psychology, University of Rochester (USA):* On autonomy support: in the workplace, more autonomy support correlates with increased trust, satisfaction and motivation, reduced stress; involves relating to others' perspectives, encouraging self-initiation and exploration.

*Martin E.P. Seligman, Professor of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania (USA):* Can human beings become lastingly happier?...the answer is 'yes'; engagement and meaning are critical components of life satisfaction; a number of interventions extensively tested and correlated to happiness; the role Government policy and in relation to addressing happiness.

*Karen Reivich, Research Associate, Department of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania (USA):* On positive psychology and coaching; positive psychology is not 'happy-ology'; exercises can build meaning, engagement and positive emotion; can achieve flow; work on strengths and meaning.

## Positive Psychology and Happiness in the Press

### *Happiness : Richard Layard at the London School of Economics – April 2005*

Lord Richard Layard, Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, was interviewed by Andrew Marr, the BBC's Political Editor. Layard is author of "Happiness: Lessons from a New Science". Excerpts from the interview can be found at ABC Radio National (Background Briefing):  
See: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s1349351.htm>

### *Happy Yet? – October 2005*

"Are we wired up to be cheerful, or are some of us destined to languish in abject misery? Dorothy Wade reports on the new science of feeling good." This article was first published on 2 October, in the UK Sunday Times and then recently in The Weekend Australian Magazine (Oct 22-23).

- "Now Seligman is famous again, this time for creating the field of positive psychology."

- "Negative thinking is ingrained in our psyche"

"Clinical psychology was the science of how to get from minus five to zero. This would be the science of getting from zero to plus five. Seligman wanted experiments, he wanted statistics, he wanted proof."

- "Dr Nick Baylis of Cambridge University is working with colleagues to "tweak" positive psychology for 'British ears'. He calls his research the "study of wellbeing" rather than the science of happiness."

See: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2099-1793873,00.htm>

### *Absolutely, Positively – October 2005*

This month's AFR Boss Magazine ran an article on the 'thinking positive' business. Positive psychology ("a gentler, more nuanced approach") is touched on by reference to the work of Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi; the latter's work concerns flow and optimal experience. (No free online link to this article.)

### *The Art of Work – August 2005*

The work of Csikszentmihalyi appeared in August's Fast Company magazine: "In the past few years, many major companies have realized that being able to control and harness this feeling [flow] is the holy grail for any manager -- or even any individual -- seeking a more productive and satisfying work experience."

See: <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/97/art-of-work.html>

### About this article

Each month, I aim to provide personal and professional development information for you and your staff. Topics covered are based on areas of interest raised by clients and colleagues, with material drawn from journals, books, articles and shared experiences.

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#### AMANDA HORNE

Thriving , Positive People & Workplaces  
Facilitator | Coach | Adviser | Trainer  
P: +61-2-6239 4566 | M: 0402 892 698  
[info@amandahorne.com.au](mailto:info@amandahorne.com.au)  
[www.amandahorne.com.au](http://www.amandahorne.com.au)