

Coach or Counsel Yourself Positive!!

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A new focus in psychology, positive psychology, has given me a new perspective on the business of children and families. There are several things I like about it. First of all, it doesn't mean giving up everything we know about standard and reliable measures for intelligence, achievement and personality. Secondly, it doesn't mean ignoring very real problems and only doing "happy talk". However, it does mean switching focus from **repairing** the bad things to **building** the positive qualities in individuals, families and communities.

Positive psychology shows what actions lead to well-being, to positive individuals and to thriving communities. It's about what kinds of families flourish, what work settings promote satisfaction, and what community efforts result in strong neighborhoods. In short, positive psychology focuses on how people's lives can be most worth living.

Positive psychology is about well-being, contentment and satisfaction (with the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). Positive psychology looks at the individual for positive traits such as the ability to love, courage, people skills, perseverance, forgiveness and originality. When looking at groups the positive psychologist looks for the virtues of responsibility, manners and civility, moderation, tolerance and the work ethic.

The ideas in positive psychology are not new— great thinkers in religion and the humanities have long written about the importance of traits like wisdom, selflessness and faith. However, earlier thinkers and writers in psychology were never able to attract a wide body of research to substantiate their ideas. In the last 50 years psychology has researched and found reliable and valid ways to measure mental illness. Sophisticated methods and interventions have allowed many untreatable mental disorders to become treatable and even curable. Happily, these same methods can now be used, with only a slight shift in emphasis, to measure, understand and **build** the characteristics that make life most worth living.

The side effect to studying positive human traits is that we learn how to scientifically protect against and prevent mental (and some physical) illnesses. The most attractive thing to me is that, when practicing psychology and personal coaching today, I can take advantage of this shift in focus. I can work with clients to build the qualities that help children, adults, families and communities to do more than just endure and survive. I can be in the business of helping people flourish and thrive! **TPS**, Inc. can stand for **The P**ositive **S**olutions!

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