

**A HOLISTIC WELL-BEING CURRICULUM:  
GUIDING STUDENTS TOWARD SUCCESS  
AND A SUSTAINABLE WORLD**

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B.A. University of Maine, 1987

A PROJECT

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

(in Interdisciplinary Studies)

August 2014

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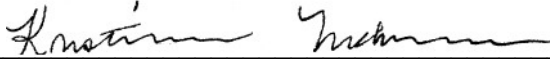
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By Aurora Walks Gently

Project Advisor: Dr. Kristina Nielson

An Abstract of the Project Presented  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
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For decades now, there has been a growing recognition of the need for environmentally “sustainable” practices (practices which ensure future generations will be able to live at least as well as the current generations), as well as considerable commitment of resources to justify, identify, and implement appropriate practices. Although scientific evidence, education and even legislation can inspire sustainable (pro-environmental/social) intention, this often does not translate into individual sustainable behavior.

Research has already shown correlation between individual well-being and such pro-environmental behaviors as reduced consumption of material goods, as well as pro-social behaviors such as professional ethics.<sup>1</sup> Relatively few resources have been invested, however, in exploring these links fully or in providing education in promoting well-being as a means of promoting sustainable behavior.

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1. C. Guven, “Reversing the question: Does happiness affect consumption and savings behavior?” *Journal of Economic Psychology* 33 no. 4 (2012), 701–717, accessed September 29, 2013. <http://www.dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2012.01.002>; Lawrence S. Krieger, “The Inseparability of Professionalism and Personal Satisfaction: Perspectives On Values, Integrity and Happiness.” *Clinical Law Review* 11, no. 2 (2005): 425-445, accessed July 8, 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

As a means of addressing the gap between knowledge of the need for sustainable behavior and one's individual practice, this project will review existing literature to (1) show that well-being and happiness serve as a prerequisite of consistent sustainable behavior; (2) identify current means of measuring well-being and effective ways of increasing our well-being, as well as common thought and behavior patterns which interfere with our well-being; and (3) briefly discuss current efforts toward teaching both well-being and sustainability. The remainder of the project will explore several of the resources and frameworks useful to instructors of such a curriculum; discuss effective pedagogy; propose an outline for such a course; and offer alternative implementations.

## **DEDICATION**

On a global level, I dedicate this project to all the individuals, communities, and peoples who seek to walk in balance because it is who they are. Thank you for holding on in a world gone mad. May we all have the wisdom to listen with our hearts when you speak from yours.

On a personal level, I dedicate this project to my nieces and nephews, and their children, in the hopes that my work and my life might somehow ensure a more loving future for us all.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first acknowledgment has to be to our creator who puts the spark of life and wholeness in each one of us. Second, to all those individuals – family, friends, mentors, and healers – who have inspired me to seek wholeness, to learn to define it for myself and to take responsibility for achieving it.

Ever since I graduated with my B.A. in 1987, I had planned to come back to school. Twenty-five years later, I finally had the opening, the readiness, and the little added inspiration to make it happen – thank you for that, Dee.

Returning to this university, joining an intentional community, and working to grow a life partnership all at once was a tremendous challenge. There is no way I can begin to express my gratitude to those – faculty, staff, students, and others – who chose to make my way easier, both personally and academically, with their warm hearts and wise words. I am blessed to have three of you on my committee. A special thanks to Phyl Brazee who was both committed and gracious enough to share her last semester teaching at UMaine as my advisor, mentor in teaching methods, and friend.

My final acknowledgment has to go to Barbara Steinbrenner – spiritual teacher, mentor, friend, and so much more. Your wisdom, steadfastness, forthrightness, and love have taught me much, especially how to walk gently with myself most of all – a critical skill returning to the halls of academia. I had no idea why I was moving to Virginia back in 2002. Now I do. Thank you for showing up.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”<sup>2</sup>

— Howard Thurman

African American author, philosopher, theologian,  
educator and civil rights leader. (1899-1981)

#### 1.1. Project Question

How can colleges and universities better prepare students to live a successful and sustainable life?

Until relatively recently, the mid-nineteenth century, the primary purpose of American higher education was to prepare students for effective citizenship and leadership through a humanities based curriculum exploring the meaning of life and human ethics from a western cultural perspective. As higher education has shifted – becoming available to a greater proportion of the population and more oriented toward the anticipated requirements of the professions and employers – the emphasis on developing a broad understanding of LIFE and one's place in it has dwindled.<sup>3</sup> Since 1985, the number of humanities majors has hovered around 7%.<sup>4</sup> Even more concerning to me is the low number of humanities courses included in the core requirements of many colleges and universities. The University of Maine, for example, requires a minimum of

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2. “Quote by Howard Thurman: ‘Don’t Ask What the World Needs. Ask What Makes ...,’” accessed August 10, 2014, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6273-don-t-ask-what-the-world-needs-ask-what-makes-you>.

3. John R. Thelin, Jason R. Edwards, and Eric Moyon, “Higher Education in the United States - HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT,” accessed July 22, 2014, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2044/Higher-Education-in-United-States.html>.

4. Tamar Lewin, “As Interest Fades in the Humanities, Colleges Worry,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2013, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/education/as-interest-fades-in-the-humanities-colleges-worry.html>.

120 credits to graduate yet only 3 credits in *ethics* and 18 credits in *Human Values and Social Context*. Looking at other colleges and universities shows similar ratios.<sup>5</sup>

Added to this shift in education was the impact of industrialization and the push for consumption that arose after WWII on community, family, and spiritual relationships. Block and McKnight note that “in our effort to find satisfaction through consumption, we are converted from citizen to consumer.”<sup>6</sup> They go on to state that the family has lost its function as the “primary unit that raises a child, sustains our health, cares for the vulnerable, and ensures economic security.”<sup>7</sup> Many of us are now isolated from the once competent communities which supported families in these endeavors – we now depend on business, government, and other institutional systems to provide these basic functions.

However we got here, it is apparent to me that relatively few adults today have a strong sense of community or the gifts and responsibilities of citizenship. While we may have been seeking our *independence*, we have often wound up trading our *interdependence* with others in our family and community for *dependence* on the specialists of government, business, and other institutions.<sup>8</sup>

My personal experience with holistic health, my own as well as observation of and service to others, has helped me recognize the importance of our sense of wholeness and intrinsic happiness in our ability to behave in ways which both ensure our own future

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5. “General Education Requirements Worksheet,” *University of Maine*, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.studentrecords.umaine.edu/files/2010/04/Gen-Ed-Worksheet.pdf>; “About the Core Program,” *Harvard University*, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=core>; Antioch College, “Curriculum Catalog 2012-2014,” 28-29, accessed July 22, 2014, [http://antiochcollege.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2012-2014\\_Curriculum\\_Catalog.pdf](http://antiochcollege.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2012-2014_Curriculum_Catalog.pdf).

6. McKnight, John, and Peter Block. *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010), 9.

7. McKnight and Block, 9.

8. McKnight and Block, 13.

well-being and support the sustainability of our planet. Some of the growing research which corroborates this concept will be explored in Chapter 2.

While well-being curricula to assist students in gaining the understanding and skills to improve their own well-being have been developed and implemented to some degree at all educational levels, implementation in the U.S. has been sparse. There are specific benefits to instituting such a curricula at the college level, which may include:

- mitigation of the growing trend of increasing mental illness in college age youth;<sup>9</sup>
- externally based perceptions of success which are commonly promoted in advertising and media are often counter to those arising from authentic well-being – empowering students toward their own well-being can enable them to develop consistent visions of their own success which are also sustainable;
- college years are often a period of exploration and growth and students are likely to be open to well-being education and able to maximize its effects.

I believe it is critical to the success of students and the sustainability of our planet that they develop strong well-being and the skills to maintain it, so that they can make their best choices and bring their best, most creative and collaborative selves to our world.

Since these topics may be of interest to the general public, as well as academics from a variety of fields, I will make a conscious effort to avoid discipline-specific jargon. Where this is not practical, definitions will be provided in the text or footnotes.

I will make little attempt to justify the need for sustainability or to specifically detail its benefits in this document. The extensive benefits of well-being will only be

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9. Nearly one half of college students surveyed in 2013 had experienced periods of “overwhelming anxiety” – and almost a third experienced periods of depression severe enough to make it difficult to function – during the previous year. Gregg Henriques, “The College Student Mental Health Crisis,” *Theory of Knowledge* (blog), *Psychology Today*, (February 15, 2014), <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/theory-knowledge/201402/the-college-student-mental-health-crisis>. Specifics on the efficacy of positive psychology treatment and prevention of mental illness can be found in Chapter 3.



briefly addressed. These concepts have been actively presented and discussed within a variety of public media. A review of the Bibliography, or a search of the internet, will point those interested toward numerous suitable sources.

## **1.2. Sustainability and Related Terms**

The concept of *sustainable development* as developed on behalf of the United Nations in 1987<sup>10</sup> – to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same – is general enough to gain *political* acceptance. Those seeking actual implementation of sustainable practices, however, often find themselves needing more detail.

One direction of the work of sustainability is to undertake a more pluralistic and holistic approach:<sup>11</sup> recognizing that for all the differences in philosophies and approaches, the needs and desires of all stakeholders are usually very similar. By actively including all stakeholders in the problem-solving and decision-making process, there is a reduction of “externalities”<sup>12</sup> and a greater potential to transcend what Orr<sup>13</sup> refers to as the “divergent” problems posed by moving toward sustainability.

Such a holistic, community oriented approach recognizes that people are part of dynamic, interacting social, economic, and environmental systems that must exist in harmony in order for their community to serve all members. This form of sustainability

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10. World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987), 16, accessed March 28, 2014, <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>.

11. Christopher B. Barrett and Ray Grizzle, "A Holistic Approach to Sustainability Based on Pluralism Stewardship," *Environmental Ethics* 21, no. 1 (1999): 23-42, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.dx.doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics199921139>.

12. In economic terms, “externalities” are situations where the costs and/or benefits of a decision are borne by those not represented in the decision-making process. Barret and Grizzle, *Holistic Approach*, 27.

13. Orr, D. W. “Four Challenges of Sustainability.” *Conservation Biology* 16, no. 6 (2002): 1457–1460, accessed March 28, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2002.01668.x>.

may include principles such as: quality of life, economic vitality, social and inter-generational equity, quality of environment, disaster resilience and mitigation, and a participatory process including all stakeholders.<sup>14</sup>

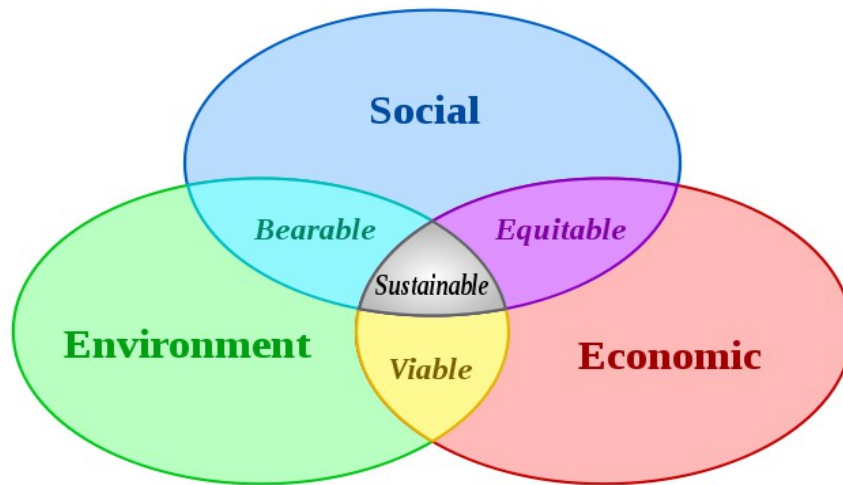


Figure 1.1. Sustainability's Triple Bottom Line. Source: Institute for International Urban Development, *Sustainable Development vs. Sustainability*, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://i2ud.org/2012/06/sustainable-development-vs-sustainability/>.

The words *sustainable*, *sustainability*, and *sustainable development* are often used interchangeably. A good guide in determining if a product or process is sustainable is the triple bottom line: social equity, environment, and economics, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Within the academic and research communities, sustainable intention and behaviors are often broadly categorized as “pro-environmental” or “pro-social.” *Pro-environmental* (or “pro-ecological”) refers to that which “consciously seeks to minimize the negative impact of one’s actions on the natural and built world”<sup>15</sup> – which may

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14. Jacquelyn L. Monday, "Building Back Better - Creating a Sustainable Community After Disaster." *Natural Hazards Informer*, no. 3 (February 2002), accessed March 28, 2014, <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards/publications/informer/infrmr3/informer3.pdf>

15. Anja Kollmuss and Julian Agyeman, "Mind the Gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior?," *Environmental Education Research* 8, no. 3 (2002): 240, accessed September 29, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350462022014540>.

include conservation, recycling, carpooling, etc. *Pro-social* indicates beliefs and actions such as ethics and volunteer work, which benefit others or society as a whole.

*Resilience* is “the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.”<sup>16</sup> *Resilience* makes the difference between *surviving* and *thriving* and, in extremely severe circumstances, can determine our survival itself. This applies to every area of our lives...most importantly, perhaps, to our emotions and our communities. Given the dramatic rate of change recent generations have experienced, and the dramatic changes that are likely yet to come – whether we pursue sustainability or not – deepening our resilience is crucial to our sustainability, well-being, and possibly even our continuation as a species.

"*Regenerative* describes processes that restore, renew or revitalize their own sources of energy and materials, creating sustainable systems that integrate the needs of society with the integrity of nature.”<sup>17</sup> While the grossest interpretation of sustainability focuses on the most basic human needs and might ignore our interdependence with other species, regenerative design and practices focus on our entire interdependent system. The term regenerative is often used to avoid the confusion of the word sustainable.

Nature, when left undisturbed, is regenerative, resilient and sustainable. None of these imply a static state. Nature is ever changing and progressing, constantly responding to change and reaching for harmony and balance.

Practicing deep observation of nature and seeking both to emulate its systems and to re-integrate ourselves into them is perhaps one of the gentlest, most effective

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16. “Resilience - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary,” accessed July 9, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resilience>.

17. “Regenerative Design - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia,” accessed July 9, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative\\_design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regenerative_design).

approaches to sustainability. Movements like permaculture and transition towns<sup>18</sup> seek to do just that.

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18. See Section 4.2 of this document for a discussion of permaculture. Information on the transition town movement can be found at <http://transitionus.org/transition-town-movement>.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF SUSTAINABILITY AND WELL-BEING

#### 2.1. Introduction

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development<sup>19</sup> which comes to a close this year has sought to “integrate values, activities and principles that are inherently linked to sustainable development into all forms of education and learning and help usher in a change in attitudes, behaviours and values to ensure a more sustainable future in social, environmental and economic terms.”<sup>20</sup> While the essential characteristics of education for sustainable development (ESD) include well-being in the realms of society, the environment, and the economy,<sup>21</sup> it does not specifically recognize the value of individual well-being and well-being education as a means of reaching the goal of sustainability.

I consider happiness and well-being to be a gateway to sustainability. Because we have been culturally programmed that consumption is a sure path to happiness, the calls for sustainability requiring reduced consumption are resisted. Once we replace this misinformation with a path to happiness which doesn't require consumption, the changes we need to make to move toward sustainability will become much more acceptable.

The brief review of literature and ideas provided in the next section, and in Chapter 3, shows that the impact of our happiness and well-being on our decision making and our ability to think creatively and collaboratively make our happiness a

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19. United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 57/254. United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* (20 December 2002), accessed July 13, 2014, <http://www.un-documents.net/a57r254.htm>.

20. UNESCO, *The UN Decade for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005 - 2014): The first two years*, 2007, 5, accessed July 13, 2014, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001540/154093e.pdf>.

21. UNESCO, *The UN Decade for Sustainable Development*, 6.

virtual prerequisite of any shift toward sustainable behavior – individually and collectively. Further, positive psychology has shown us that happiness and well-being are within the reach of every individual regardless of education, financial status, or any other attribute.

While there is often resistance to even desired change, I believe the desire for happiness is great enough to overcome that resistance... once people understand that happiness is within their reach. We can leverage that desire by offering education to people of all ages in diverse forms and settings. We have more than adequate understanding of how to effectively promote and teach happiness and well-being.

## **2.2. Decision Making and the Intention-Behavior Gap**

As our need to live sustainably becomes more accepted, questions arise as to how to move ourselves in that direction. Efforts to promote sustainability have largely focused on education as a means of developing awareness of the need for sustainability and sustainable intentions (attitude) with the expectation that these would translate into behavior. Results and research have clearly shown, however, that intention is not enough<sup>22</sup>. This variance between human intentions and behavior is common among all fields of study relating to human decision making and behavior and has been labeled the “intention-behavior gap.”

Human decision making has been studied, taught and used, as a means of understanding, influencing and motivating both individuals and groups for centuries. Until recently, decision making was considered to be a cognitive process easily mapped

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22. Kollmuss and Agyeman, "Mind the Gap," 239-260.

as awareness→attitude→behavior.<sup>23</sup> Common guidance around how to make good decisions has often ignored emotion – or suggested the necessity of minimizing its influence.

Today, decision making is recognized as a complex process which is informed by one's entire being: rational thought and informed intellect, yes, and also less conscious and cognitive aspects including values arising from our spiritual and cultural traditions, emotions and personal experience, and intuitive or “gut” feelings. In fact, many decisions are made predominantly from the unconscious side and it has been found that, in the flood of information available today, it is often only the most recent information that impacts decision making.<sup>24</sup>

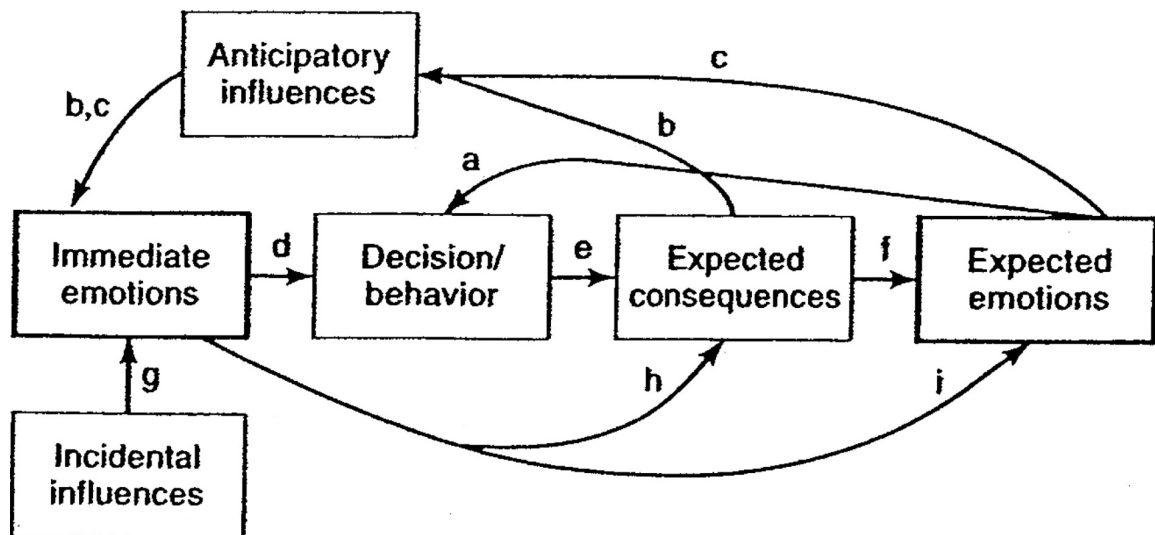


Figure 2.1. Determinants and Consequences of Immediate and Expected Emotions. Source: Loewenstein, George, and Jennifer S. Lerner. "The role of affect in decision making," in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, ed. Richard, J. Davidson, Klaus R. Scherer, and H. Hill Goldsmith.(Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2003), 621.

23. George Loewenstein and Jennifer S. Lerner, "The Role of Affect in Decision Making," in *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, ed. Richard J. Davidson, Klaus R. Scherer, and H. Hill Goldsmith.(Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2003), 619, accessed March 30, 2014, Ebrary Academic Complete Subscription Collection.

24. Ray B. Williams "How Can We Make Better Decisions?," *Wired for Success* (blog), *Psychology Today*," September 25, 2011, accessed April 3, 2014, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/wired-success/201109/how-can-we-make-better-decisions>.

This complex understanding of decision-making helps us to more fully address the intention-behavior gap, recognizing emotion as playing both direct and indirect roles. Figure 2.1 suggests that one's current (immediate) emotions, even when not related to the decision at hand (incidental influences) impact decision making. The expected consequences and emotions also produce anticipatory influences which may impact current emotions, as well as influence the decision more directly.

This rather recursive relationship between emotions and decision making helps to explain why our current emotions so often play a strong role in our decision making.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, many of us have experienced deciding to curtail a behavior which we judge to be less than beneficial, only to go back to it when we are “under the influence” of stress or uncomfortable emotions. Not surprisingly, research has found that happy people are more inclined to consider the long-term impact of their choices (including impact to others and the environment), take longer to make decisions and have more control over their behavior.<sup>26</sup>

While research directly relating emotion to sustainable behavior is relatively recent and not voluminous, it “shows that affinity towards nature, happiness, satisfaction, empathy, interest in nature, biophilia<sup>27</sup>, and affinity towards bio- and socio-diversity are positive emotional states promoting sustainable actions.”<sup>28</sup> In a study conducted with 455

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25. Loewenstein and Lerner, "The Role of Affect in Decision Making," 619-642.

26. Cahit Guven, “Reversing the question: Does happiness affect consumption and savings behavior?,” *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 33, no. 4 (2012), 701–717, accessed September 29, 2013, <http://www.dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2012.01.002>.

27. According to Wikipedia, the term *biophilia* literally means “love of life or living systems.” It was first used by psychologist Eric Fromm and was popularized by Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson.

28. Cesar Tapia-Fonllem, Victor Corral-Verdugo, Claudia Gutierrez-Sida, Jose Mireles-Acosta, and Hugo Tirado-Medina, "Emotions and Pro-Environmental Behavior," In *Psychological Approaches to Sustainability: Current Trends in Theory, Research and Applications*, ed. Victor Corral-Verdugo, Cirilo Humberto García-Cadena, and Martha Frías-Armenta, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2010), 247.



individuals living in three Mexican cities, pro-environmental intentions were shown to effect pro-ecological behavior, as expected. "*Yet the influence of emotions on pro-ecological behavior was higher than the one promoted by intentions*"<sup>29</sup> (emphasis added). Just as expected from the previously discussed decision-making model, emotions were found to have both direct and indirect effects (by impacting intention) on sustainable behavior.<sup>30</sup>

While positive emotions have been consistently found to promote positive behavior, some negative emotions, such as fear, may inhibit sustainable behaviors while others, such as indignation, may promote sustainable behavior.<sup>31</sup> This may be another reason why efforts to increase intention through education often fail to inspire the behavior changes deemed necessary. Many of the educational efforts put forth to promote sustainability use dramatic facts and images to inspire more positive behavior, yet negative emotions often result. Counter to the intention, the effect often seems to inhibit positive change. Dramatic facts may be an important piece of the puzzle; promoting positive emotions, however, may prove more effective in creating positive change.

### **2.3. Well-Being and Sustainability: A Regenerative Cycle**

As will become clear in Chapter 3, well-being and sustainability are part of a beautiful cycle. When we are happy and well, we feel connected to others and to our environment. When we feel truly connected to others and to the world around us, we feel

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29. Tapia-Fonllem, Corral-Verdugo, Gutierrez-Sida, Mireles-Acosta, and Tirado-Medina, "Emotions and Pro-Environmental Behavior," 248.

30. Tapia-Fonllem, Corral-Verdugo, Gutierrez-Sida, Mireles-Acosta, and Tirado-Medina, "Emotions and Pro-Environmental Behavior," 247.

31. Tapia-Fonllem, Corral-Verdugo, Gutierrez-Sida, Mireles-Acosta, and Tirado-Medina, "Emotions and Pro-Environmental Behavior," 248.

better. When we feel good, we do good; when we do good, we feel good. When we are happy and well, we make better choices, we feel creative, collaborative, engaged, empowered, and truly alive. We want to be part of the solution and we know we have something of value to offer.

## CHAPTER 3

### ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS OF WELL-BEING

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a very focused review of literature relating to happiness and well-being. Instead of a broad review of literature intended to explore all of the viewpoints, this review will focus on where research has caught up with the wisdom of many traditions, and which my own experience and wisdom recognize as Truth.

#### 3.2. Positive Psychology

Since the majority of current research into happiness and well-being fall within the field of *positive psychology*, this section will provide a brief introduction. Positive psychology, according to Martin Seligman, who is often considered one of the founders of the field, is not so much a new discipline as a reclamation of two thirds of the intention of psychology prior to World War II: “making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent.”<sup>32</sup> After World War II, with the advent of the Veterans' Administration in 1946 and the National Institute of Mental Health in 1947, the field of psychology began to focus almost solely on what used to be the other third of psychology's mission: curing mental illness (or at least treating and researching pathology). While few would argue the benefits arising from that focus, it seems clear that it is not enough. Depression is rampant (the World Health Organization

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32. Martin E. P. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. "Positive psychology: An introduction." *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (January 2000): 6, accessed December 3, 2013, *PsycARTICLES*, EBSCOhost.

estimates that it will be the second leading cause of mortality by 2020<sup>33</sup>) and barely half of adults in the U.S. are “moderately mentally healthy”<sup>34</sup>

Positive psychology emphasizes prevention and recognizes that “the major strides in prevention have come largely from a perspective focused on systematically building competency, not on correcting weakness.”<sup>35</sup> Prevention research has shown that mental illness may be buffered against by numerous human strengths such as: “courage, future mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance, and the capacity for flow and insight.”<sup>36</sup> The work for this century is to learn how to encourage these virtues in people:

The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.<sup>37</sup>

Great strides have been made in applying positive psychology since the turn of the twenty-first century. While short-term psychotherapy and drugs are proven to provide only temporary suppression of symptoms for mood disorders such as depression,<sup>38</sup> an initial study of patients with severe depression showed that 55% of those treated for 14

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33. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 37.

34. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 14.

35. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive psychology: An introduction,” 7.

36. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive psychology: An introduction,” 7.

37. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, “Positive Psychology: An Introduction,” 5.

38. Seligman, *Flourishing*, 46.

sessions according to Seligman and Rashid's Positive Psychotherapy Treatment<sup>39</sup> protocol achieved remission.<sup>40</sup>

In a culture where most people are taught by schools, government, advertisers, friends, and often even parents, to look outside themselves; where we are taught to look to the experts in every area of life from medicine to politics to happiness and well-being itself; positive psychology points us inward. This is not new. Philosophers, theologians, and wise people from all walks of life have recognized this since, perhaps, we humans first began to ponder and seek out happiness.

### **3.3. Definitions of Happiness and Well-Being**

Happiness, and the broader concept of well-being, have been a growing focus world-wide, as illustrated by WorldCat's<sup>41</sup> population of nearly 70,000 items including “happiness” in their title and over 30,000 titles including “well-being.” More than one-third of these titles were published in the twenty-first century. As discussed above, happiness directly impacts our ability to make good decisions for ourselves, our community and our planet. We also noted that personal and societal well-being are included in the broader definitions of sustainability.

Because happiness is an *experience*, defining it is complex. Before exploring more detailed definitions of happiness, let us examine a variety of terms used in discussing happiness.

Gilbert suggests, “The word happiness is used to indicate at least three related things, which we might roughly call emotional happiness, moral happiness, and

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39. Seligman, *Flourishing*, 41.

40. Seligman, *Flourishing*, 43.

41. WorldCat ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)) is an online library catalog itemizing titles held in more than 72000 libraries world-wide.

judgmental happiness.”<sup>42</sup> Emotional happiness, sometimes called *hedonic* happiness is a momentary pleasurable feeling, totally separate from any future considerations. Moral happiness, or *eudaimonia* (a Greek word meaning “good spirit”), refers loosely to feelings arising from a life well lived. While *eudaimonia* will often include hedonic happiness, hedonic happiness will often not be *eudaimonic*. Judgmental happiness, on the other hand, isn't really a feeling at all – its more of a statement of past or potential feeling. Cues to such usage include the phrases “I'm happy about...” or “I'm happy that...”

Other terms which are common in discussions of happiness include *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* happiness. *Extrinsic* happiness arises from outside a person, via such things as possessions, praise and status, and it generates hedonic, but not *eudaimonic*, happiness. *Intrinsic* or “authentic” happiness arises from inside oneself through qualities and activities such as a sense of one's place in the grand design of life, relationships, engagement in community, and meaningful work. Intrinsic happiness is roughly equivalent to *eudaimonia* and also generates hedonic happiness.

Extrinsic happiness is not lasting. In fact, it often brings ill health, as well as behavior counter to sustainability, such as excessive consumption. Intrinsic happiness has been found to be associated with positive health and well-being<sup>43</sup> as well as resilience, which enables people to respond well to change and other stressors, including traumatic events.<sup>44</sup> Throughout time, philosophers, theologians, and others have warned

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42. Daniel Todd Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2006), 33.

43. Elin Kelsey and Catherine O'Brien, “Sustainable Happiness,” *Green Teacher*, no. 93 (Summer 2011): 3-7, accessed April 4, 2014, Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOhost.

44. PBS Online, “What is Happiness?” *This Emotional Life*, accessed October 14, 2012, <http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/happiness/what-happiness>.

against extrinsic happiness, and promoted intrinsic happiness. As nineteenth century philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer noted: “It is difficult to find happiness within oneself, but it is impossible to find it anywhere else.”<sup>45</sup>

*Well-being* and happiness are often used interchangeably and often used in defining each other. *Well-being* is generally considered to include the emotion of happiness or contentment. Lyubomirsky notes that “academic researchers prefer the term *subjective well-being* (or simply *well-being*) because it sounds more scientific and does not carry the weight of centuries of historical, literary, and philosophical subtexts.”<sup>46</sup>

While I generally consider well-being in a holistic sense – including physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual components which are both interrelated and synergistic – for the purposes of this review, except as noted, we will consider well-being to be roughly synonymous with happiness.

Foster and Hicks define happiness as “a profound, enduring feeling of contentment, capability and centeredness...knowing that you can deal productively and creatively with all that life offers—the the good and the bad. It's knowing your internal self and responding to your real needs, rather than the demands of others. And it's a deep sense of engagement—living in the moment and enjoying life's bounty.”<sup>47</sup> Although they are corporate consultants who began researching happiness in 1995, their definition of happiness is not entirely dissimilar to those of *positive psychologists* such as Lyubomirsky and Seligman.

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45. “Arthur Schopenhauer > Quotes,” accessed July 23, 2014, [http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/11682.Arthur\\_Schopenhauer](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/11682.Arthur_Schopenhauer).

46. Sonja Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 32.

47. Rick Foster and Greg Hicks, *How We Choose to Be Happy: The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People-- Their Secrets, Their Stories* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1999), 3.

Lyubomirsky defines happiness as “the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile.”<sup>48</sup> This is similar to Seligman's authentic happiness theory in which he suggested that happiness has three aspects each chosen for their own sake: positive emotion, engagement, and meaning. All three feed into life satisfaction and are measured entirely by subjective report.<sup>49</sup>

Seligman point out in *Flourish*, however, that he has moved toward a more comprehensive idea of “well-being.” He notes that his previous theory of authentic happiness had three weaknesses:

- the popular meaning of “happiness” is limited to positive emotion – a cheerful mood;
- one's feeling of life satisfaction is largely – more than 70% on average – dependent on one's mood at the moment and is thus too variable to be useful on its own (it also discounts the fact that half the world's population are not cheerful at all);
- there are other elements, such as accomplishment, that people choose for their own sake.

In Seligman's current view, well-being is a construct – not measurable on its own – which is contributed to, but not defined by the following characteristics:

- positive emotion (including happiness and life satisfaction);
- engagement (sometimes called “flow”);
- relationships;
- meaning and purpose;
- accomplishment.

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48. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 32.

49. Martin E. P. Seligman, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 11.



Note that each of these elements has 3 properties: they contribute to well-being; they are often pursued for their own sake; and they are defined and measured independent of other elements.<sup>50</sup>

### **3.4. Benefits of Well-Being<sup>51</sup>**

Some of the more recent work of positive psychologists has included detailing the benefits of subjective well-being. In Deiner and Ryan's 2009 overview, they specify the benefits of well-being found in four areas: health and longevity, work and income, social relations, and societal benefits.<sup>52</sup>

People with subjective well-being tend to experience greater longevity, better health, and fewer “unpleasant physical symptoms.”<sup>53</sup> They have been found to have stronger immune systems, better cardiovascular health, better health habits (such as wearing seatbelts), and fewer lifestyle diseases (including alcoholism and other addictions).

Regarding work and income, research has shown that people with high subjective well-being are judged by supervisors as “having more productivity, dependability, creativity, and overall higher work quality.”<sup>54</sup> They also practice greater organizational citizenship, doing tasks that are not required such as helping co-workers. The benefits of higher well-being go both ways, however, with happier employees enjoying their work more and earning more money than their less happy peers. The finding that “well-being

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50. Seligman, *Flourish*, 16.

51. Because it appears complete and consistent with my other research, contents for this entire section were extracted from Ed Diener and Katherine Ryan. "Subjective well-being: a general overview." *South African Journal Of Psychology* 39, no. 4 (December 2009): 391-406, accessed July 24, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost. Only exact quotes will be footnoted in this section.

52. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 392.

53. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 393.

54. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 392.

causes economic and career success has been replicated in studies conducted in other parts of the world,<sup>55</sup> as well as in the U.S.

In the area of relationship, people with higher well-being “tend to have higher levels of self-confidence, warmth, leadership ability, sociability, and more friends.”<sup>56</sup> Their relationships tend to be more close and supportive. Relating to marriage, for example, not only are happier people more likely to marry, they are also more likely to stay married and to be happy in their marriages. Deiner and Ryan went so far as to say that “people with high subjective well-being actually generate their own social support systems.”<sup>57</sup>

Contrary to the notion that people seeking their own well-being are selfish, people with higher levels of well-being are found to be more altruistic and community minded – both more likely to volunteer and to invest more hours volunteering. “Moreover, people who experience high levels of well-being on average tend to have more trusting, co-operative, and pro-peace attitudes, more confidence in the government, stronger support for democracy, and lower levels of intolerance for immigrants and racial groups.”<sup>58</sup>

While these findings certainly indicate many reasons to pursue well-being, it is important to reiterate that they are based on overall well-being and life satisfaction, not on hedonic happiness...pursuing specifically momentary pleasure can in fact reduce one's overall well-being. It is also worth noting that while the very happiest people excel the

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55. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 392.

56. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 392.

57. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 392.

58. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 393.

most at relationships and volunteering, those experiencing “slightly lower levels of well-being are the most successful in terms of income, education, and political participation.”<sup>59</sup>

### 3.5. Measuring Well-Being

One of the challenges faced by early positive psychologists in the 1980s was the perception by existing psychologists that studying happiness was “flaky” because happiness could only be measured subjectively. Yet, as Ed Deiner, Ph.D. and professor of psychology at the University of Illinois, points out in the movie *Happy*<sup>60</sup> they had been measuring depression subjectively for years.

This perception that happiness (well-being) was not measurable objectively is perhaps one of the reasons for the United States' post-World War II focus on economic growth and increasing gross domestic product (GDP) as beneficial and desirable *measures* of national well-being. Unfortunately, our culture has come to perceive them as goals in and of themselves. This has led to the promotion of consumption in support of increasing the GDP, and, theoretically, increasing the well-being of the nation.<sup>61</sup>

While this approach has been supported by government and industry alike, studies show that, beyond a certain level above the ability to supply basic needs, increased income does not increase a person's perception of happiness.<sup>62</sup> Further, “Materialistic values have been shown to lower personal lifestyle satisfaction”<sup>63</sup>, often leading to

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59. Deiner and Ryan, “ Subjective well-being,” 393.

60. Ed Deiner in *Happy*, directed by Roko Belic, (Wadi Rum Films, 2010), accessed April 4, 2014, Amazon Instant Video.

61. Catherine O'Brien, "Sustainable happiness: How happiness studies can contribute to a more sustainable future," *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne* 49, no. 4 (2008): 289-295, accessed April 4, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0013235>.

62. Kelsey and O'Brien, “Sustainable Happiness.”

63. Eric Assadourian, “Cultural change for a bearable climate,” *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy* 6, no. 2 (2010):1-5, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://search.proquest.com.prxy4.ursus.maine.edu/docview/1430248454?accountid=14583>.

illnesses, such as those related to obesity, and decreased social well-being due to inequitable distribution of resources.<sup>64</sup> Measuring national well-being via GDP has proven to not only be insufficient in correlating with the well-being of persons within the nation; it has also lead to the promotion of behaviors, such as over consumption and inequitable distribution of resources, which have a negative impact on both personal well-being and the sustainability of our world.

Part of the challenge in developing broader, more appropriate measures of well-being has been our attachment to the strictly rational approach of the scientific method requiring measurability, unbiased observation, and repeatability. While it continues to be a tremendous tool, when attempting to define the complexity of interactions and relationships within human and/or ecological systems, there is significant difficulty in effectively applying the scientific method – particularly to the more emotional and spiritual aspects of humanity. This is partly because there are still many qualities and phenomena which we do not have a scientific means to measure, and partly because qualities like well-being and happiness can really only be self-reported. Once it was recognized that humans are quite consistent in their ability to self-report such qualities,<sup>65</sup> the way was opened for the development of measures for both personal and societal well-being.

Significant strides are being made in broadening the measures available to inform policy decision making. The Human Development Index which came into use in 1990 is

64. Assadourian, “Cultural change for a bearable climate,” 5.

65. The reliability of self-reported happiness measures had been established by the mid-1960s. Wilson, Warner R. "Correlates of Avowed Happiness." *Psychological Bulletin* 67, no. 4 (April 1967), 294, accessed July 23, 2014, *PsycARTICLES*, EBSCOhost. By the mid-1990s more comprehensive and longer term measures of subjective well-being were being found reliable. Ed Diener, “Assessing Subjective Well-Being: Progress and Opportunities,” *Social Indicators Research* 31, no. 2 (February 1, 1994): 103–57, accessed July 23, 2014, doi:10.1007/BF01207052.

but one example of such improvement. While still very limited in its measurement, it moves toward a more people centered approach, including life expectancy, education levels, and gross national income per capita. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) developed *Guidelines for Measuring Subjective Well-Being* as part of their “Better Life Initiative” intending to “measure society’s progress across eleven domains of well-being, ranging from income, jobs, health, skills and housing, through to civic engagement and the environment.”<sup>66</sup>

The guidelines do not provide specific questions. They instead provide extensive discussion and “best practice” guidance on every facet of questionnaire design and analysis, with the intention of “encouraging international compatibility of data.”<sup>67</sup> Figure 3.1 is illustrative of the elements of a simple model of subjective well-being.

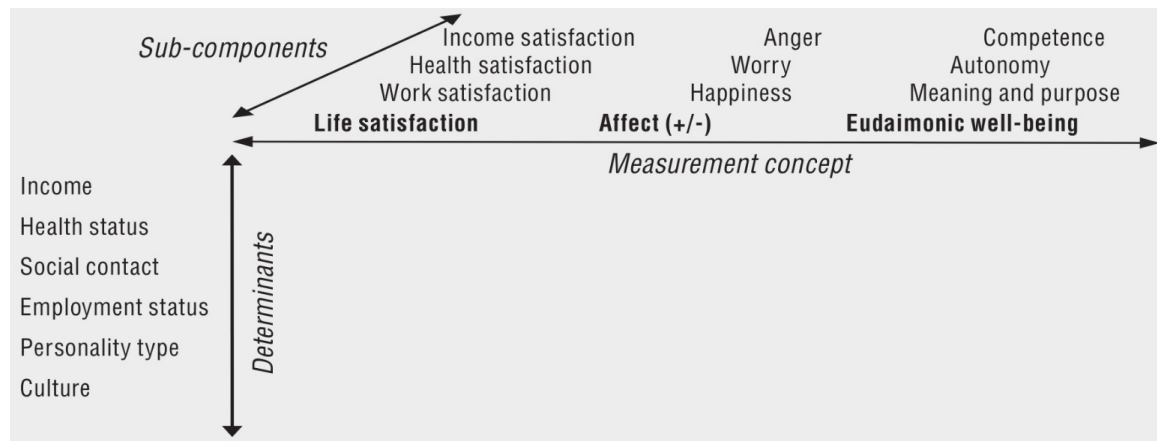


Figure 3.1. A Simple Model of Subjective Well-Being. Source: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being* (OECD Publishing , 2013), 3, accessed March 30, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>, 33.

66. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being* (OECD Publishing , 2013), 3, accessed March 30, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en>.

67. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Guidelines on Measuring*, 9.

While improving societal measures is critical for making effective policy decisions, the development of inventories for measuring aspects of personal well-being has enabled researchers to verify the effectiveness of methods for increasing our well-being, as well as providing individuals guidance in their own quest for well-being. This will be the focus for the remainder of this section.

An extensive selection of well-being related questionnaires can be found online at the University of Pennsylvania's Positive Psychology Center.<sup>68</sup> These questionnaires were developed by numerous individuals and teams, most of whom work in the field of positive psychology; many of these questionnaires are published in Seligman's book *Authentic Happiness*. Each of the questionnaires offers a brief explanation, and/or refers to more detail in *Authentic Happiness*. Some of the questionnaires are still in testing and cannot yet specifically indicate the relationship of participant's scores to their well-being. These sixteen questionnaires measure four categories of well-being:

Emotion:

- Authentic Happiness Inventory Questionnaire - Measures Overall Happiness
- Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D) Questionnaire - Measures Depression Symptoms
- Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire - Measures Current Happiness
- General Happiness Questionnaire - Assesses Enduring Happiness
- PANAS Questionnaire - Measures Positive and Negative Affect

Engagement:

- Brief Strengths Test - Measures 24 Character Strengths
- Gratitude Questionnaire - Measures Appreciation about the Past
- Grit Survey - Measures the Character Strength of Perseverance

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68. <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/questionnaires.aspx> sources of the various questionnaires can be found on this site.

- Optimism Test - Measures Optimism About the Future
- Transgression Motivations Questionnaire - Measures Forgiveness
- VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire - Measures 24 Character Strengths
- VIA Strength Survey for Children - Measures 24 Character Strengths for Children
- Work-Life Questionnaire - Measures Work-Life Satisfaction

Meaning (including relationship):

- Close Relationships Questionnaire - Measures Attachment Style
- Compassionate Love Scale - Measures your tendency to support, help, and understand other people
- Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ-10) - Measures Meaningfulness

Life Satisfaction:

- Approaches to Happiness Questionnaire - Measures Three Routes to Happiness
- Satisfaction with Life Scale - Measures Life Satisfaction

Scores are presented both directly and as compared with other web users, others of the same gender, age group, occupation, education, or zip code. These questionnaires are being used for research and provide no “diagnostic” information. Scores are saved so that one might retake the questionnaires as a means of measuring personal progress.

Grouping and categorizing the results of such tests may be helpful for well-being program development, policy decisions, and other such analyses. Maintaining results of individuals for future comparison (with appropriate privacy measures), so that personal progress might be measured, also seems useful. I found it concerning, however, that individual results were presented as compared to others and that many of the questions asked participants to compare ourselves to others. This seems counterproductive when, as discussed later in this chapter, so much evidence points to comparison with others as having a largely negative impact on our happiness.

Many of the books discussing approaches to becoming happier included one or more questionnaires to assist readers in determining how happy they are, what areas which affect their happiness show the greatest opportunity for improvement, or which activities might prove most productive in increasing their happiness.

My personal opinion is that the greatest benefit of happiness questionnaires is as educational tools and for measuring personal progress – being told we're not as happy, or even more happy, than others may actually point us toward extrinsic happiness. I – and many researchers (see discussion in section 3.6.2) – agree with Teddy Roosevelt “Comparison is the thief of joy...” When we focus on comparing ourselves, we impair our happiness.

I would propose that whether one might become happier might be gauged by the following questions:

- How happy are you right now? (1-10, where 1 is miserable and 10 is blissful)
- Are you as happy as you would like to be? (1-10, 1 is nowhere near and 10 is totally)
- If it means becoming happier, are you willing to change your thinking and behavior? (1-10, 1 is absolutely, 10 is no way)

Totaling these scores for a maximum of 30 points would indicate how likely we are to successfully increase our happiness – the lower the score, the greater the likelihood of improvement.

Only the individual can determine whether their desire is sufficient to overcome their resistance to change. If it is, then I highly recommend investing the time in completing some of the available questionnaires. While they are not perfect, they will provide both a baseline to enable you to mark your progress and insight into which areas



of well-being might provide the greatest benefit for you before you invest in learning specifics about how to increase your well-being.

### **3.6. Myths<sup>69</sup> and Perplexities**

The challenges to our happiness discussed below are far from insurmountable. In the next section, we will explore some relatively easy approaches to increasing our happiness. The greatest challenge, once we become aware there is reason to change, is first to decide it's worth the effort and then actually follow through until the new thoughts and behaviors become part of our daily patterns.

#### **3.6.1. Hedonic Adaptation**

“Much of what we believe about the causes and sources of happiness simply isn't true.”<sup>70</sup> According to Daniel Gilbert, Ph.D. and author of *Stumbling on Happiness*, humans are pretty poor at estimating how long or how intensely events will impact us. This is partly because our psychological immune system includes *hedonic adaptation* – adapting to what is.

However bad, or good, we initially judge a circumstance to be, eventually we become used to it and, in effect, it becomes our new normal. We have all had moments in our life when we thought our life was “ruined.” Yet years, months, or even weeks later we've moved on. Conversely, we may have won a championship, achieved our “dream” job or married the “love of our life,” yet the intensity of our happiness tends to fade. As

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69. “an idea or story that is believed by many people but that is not true” is the definition of *myth* that is referred to in this section. Merriam Webster, accessed July 24, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth>.

70. Dan Gilbert in *Happy*, directed by Roko Belic.

Gilbert says, we humans overestimate the impact of future events...they never make us feel as bad, or good, for as long we think they will.<sup>71</sup>

### **3.6.1.1. Postponing Happiness**

There are two myths that sometimes trap people into postponing their happiness: “*I’ll be happy when...*” and “*I can’t be happy when...*” Understanding the nature of happiness – that it is *intrinsically* derived and can only occur in the *present* – and of hedonic adaptation’s ability to moderate the impact of negative circumstances on our happiness can go a long way in helping us to outgrow these myths.

### **3.6.1.2. Using Hedonic Adaptation for Greatest Benefit**

In section 3.7, we will see how tools such as gratitude can help us to make the most out of the positive happenings in our life...keeping that blessed feeling from fading away. If we can avoid destructive reactions, as psychologist Sonya Lyubomirsky points out, hedonic adaptation will moderate the lasting impact of even the most dramatic circumstances:

It is really our responses to them (events and circumstances) that govern the repercussions. Indeed, it is our initial reactions that make these turns of events into crisis points in the first place, instead of the foreseeable and even ordinary passages of life that they actually are. Unfortunately, our initial reactions compel us to choose dramatic (and often devastating) response paths.<sup>72</sup>

### **3.6.1.3. Resilience and Posttraumatic Growth**

Hedonic adaptation is part of what makes resilience possible. Learning to make the most of hedonic adaptation, as well as other well-being skills can help us to improve our resilience.

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71. Dan Gilbert in *Happy*, directed by Roko Belic.

72. Lyubomirsky, *The Myths of Happiness*, 2.

*Posttraumatic growth* is a particularly remarkable form of resilience. Many people who have survived trauma that has left them indelibly changed – paraplegics and quadriplegics for example – soon return to a level of happiness similar to, or even above, what they experienced prior to the trauma. Many even feel their life is *better* than it was before the trauma.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.6.2. Comparison

The benefits of comparison, and its close cousin competition, are also “mythical” – both in the degree which our culture buys into them and in their actual value in optimizing our well-being. While appearing or feeling “better” than others may create a slight boost to our happiness, no one is better than everyone at everything and the game of comparing ourselves to others will create a net negative effect on our happiness.

Studies have shown that comparing ourselves with others – whether it is a child noticing that his classmate has a cooler backpack or an executive finding out that she is making a higher salary than her colleague – has a profound effect on our moods and emotional well-being. Indeed, it's comparison to other people that are primarily to blame for our feelings of inadequacy and discontent.<sup>74</sup>

Psychologist Sonya Lyubomirsky points out that people who “typically rely on our own internal, objective standards are happiest.”<sup>75</sup> She also found that in a mildly competitive experiment, happy people were happy to do well, even if the other person did better; unhappy people, on the other hand, would rather beat the other person, even if they both did poorly.<sup>76</sup> This might suggest that both our “dog eat dog world” (the need to

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73. Kanako Taku, Arnie Cann, Lawrence G. Calhoun, and Richard G. Tedeschi, “The Factor Structure of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: A Comparison of Five Models Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis.” *Journal Of Traumatic Stress* 21, no. 2 (April 2008): 158-164, accessed July 24, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

74. Lyubomirsky, *The Myths of Happiness*, 132.

75. Lyubomirsky, *The Myths of Happiness*, 134.

76. Lyubomirsky, *The Myths of Happiness*, 134.

be better than others at any cost) and a tendency toward mediocrity (“I don't have to be great as long as I'm better than some”) are, at least in part, a *result* of our unhappiness, as well as part of the cause.

### **3.6.3. Multi-Tasking**

The idea that multi-tasking is largely beneficial is a contemporary myth that can dramatically impact our well-being. First, let's look at the related concept of mind wandering – the tendency of our mind to wander from thinking only about what we are doing in the moment. Killingsworth and Gilbert developed an application for the Apple iPhone which has enabled them to collect data from more than 5000 people and 83 countries.<sup>77</sup> The Track Your Happiness<sup>78</sup> application will text and/or email the subject randomly 3 or more times per day, during the waking hours they specify. As soon as possible, the subject completes a brief online survey. After 50 entries, the application offers you a report, based on the intake survey and your in-the-moment entries. Killingsworth and Gilbert's initial findings on mind wandering, indicate the following: 1) mind-wandering occurs nearly half the time and, with the exception of making love, at least 30% of the time in every activity surveyed; 2) what people were doing had almost no impact on the pleasantness of the topic to which their mind wandered; 3) people were less happy when their minds were wandering, even if they were performing an unpleasant activity; and 4) while people were no happier thinking about pleasant topics than about their activity, thinking about neutral or unpleasant topics caused them to feel considerably less happy than focusing on their activity.<sup>79</sup> Given the recognized

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77. Matthew A. Killingsworth and Daniel T. Gilbert, "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind," *Science* 330, no. 6006 (2010): 932, accessed March 29, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/2010.1126/science.1192439>.

78. Available at [trackyourhappiness.org](http://trackyourhappiness.org).

79. Killingsworth and Gilbert, "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind."

importance of engagement to our well-being, it makes perfect sense that mind-wandering might have harmful effects to our happiness.

Multi-tasking brings mind-wandering to a whole new level. The practice of consciously trying to do multiple things at once that has become prevalent in the last twenty years is one of many behaviors that are increasing our stress and making us *less* effective. Psychiatrist Edward M. Hallowell, who has spent his career specializing in attention deficit disorder (ADD/ADHD), has coined the term Attention Deficit Trait (ADT). This neurological phenomenon includes core symptoms of distractibility, inner frenzy, and impatience.<sup>80</sup> Where ADD arises from a genetic component that may be aggravated by environmental and physical factors, ADT is strictly a response to environmental factors. Overcome by distractions, interruptions, and too many things to attend to at once, our brains become unable to attend fully to anything.

“Studies have shown that as the human brain is asked to process dizzying amounts of data, its ability to solve problems flexibly and creatively declines and the number of mistakes increases.”<sup>81</sup> We go into stress overload – full blown “fight or flight.” As a temporary condition to help us fight physical threats from the natural world, sinking into our black and white, relatively instinctual thinking is very effective. However, when we get “stuck” in fight or flight mode, our bodies begin to break down, our judgment is impaired and our relationships suffer.

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80. Edward M. Hallowell, "Overloaded Circuits: Why Smart People Underperform, " *Harvard Business Review* 83, no. 1 (January 2005): 56, accessed April 8, 2014, EBSCOhost Business Source Complete.

81. Hallowell, "Overloaded Circuits," 57.

Neuroscientist Earl Miller of MIT explains it this way: "People can't multitask very well, and when people say they can, they're deluding themselves."<sup>82</sup> What we're actually doing is switching between the tasks very, very fast. This becomes especially difficult with tasks that are similar enough to use the same part of the brain...like writing an email while talking on the phone.

Multitasking has particular effects on our learning capacity. For youngsters who begin multitasking at an early age, there is concern that they may not be able to focus on learning crucial, yet slow to develop, social skills.<sup>83</sup> Further, when people of any age are attempting to learn while multitasking, the information is stored in the region of the brain designed for learning skills, the striatum, rather than being stored in the hippocampus which is designed for storing information for easy recall. Humans are designed to focus on the task at hand. When we rob ourselves of that skill, we impair not only our effectiveness, learning capacity, and well-being, we also fail to make the neural connections responsible for the qualities that help make us uniquely human – our compassion, self-awareness, and creativity.<sup>84</sup>

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82. Jon Hamilton, "Think You're Multitasking? Think Again," *NPR: National Public Radio: Morning Edition, Research News* (October 2, 2008), accessed April 14, 2014, <http://bomedia.pbworks.com/f/multitasking%20.pdf>.

83. John Naish, "Is multi-tasking bad for your brain? Experts reveal the hidden perils of juggling too many jobs," (2009), accessed March 30, 2014, <http://pikespeaksymposium.pbworks.com/w/file/38003050/Is%20Multitasking%20Bad%20for%20Your%20Brain.docx>

84. Naish, "Is multi-tasking bad"

### 3.7. Achieving Well-Being

*Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.*<sup>85</sup>  
– Abraham Lincoln

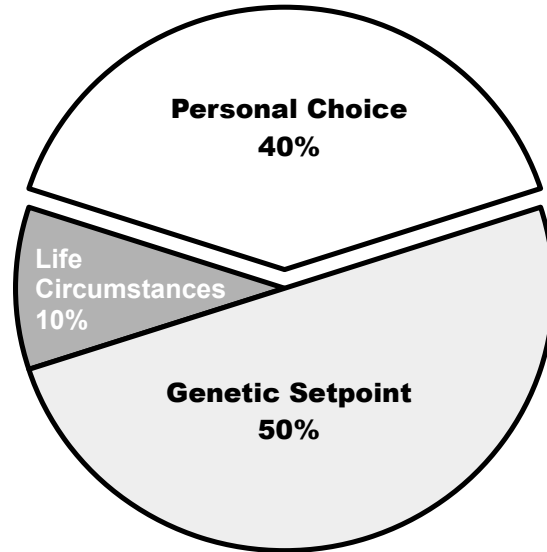


Figure 3.2. Underlying Causes of Happiness.

According to researchers, Abraham Lincoln was at least partly correct. They have determined that, similar to body weight, we each have a genetically determined set point accounting for half of our happiness level. What may seem surprising is that only 10% of our happiness level is influenced by life circumstances. This leaves 40% of our happiness entirely up to us, as shown in Figure 3.2.<sup>86</sup>

I realize the label “Personal Choice” may have caused you to bristle...it is sometimes labeled “intentional activity.” Yet one of the most important things we can do to improve our happiness is to recognize that it *is* a personal choice. Be very clear that this is meant as *empowerment*, not *blame*. We are all subject to social conditioning as

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85. Abraham Lincoln. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2014. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/abrahamlin100845.html>, accessed August 11, 2014.

86. Lyubomirsky, Sonja, Kennon M. Sheldon, and David Schkade. "Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change." *Review of General Psychology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 111.

children, and even as adults. As adults, however, we have the opportunity to make different choices as we learn other options. As was shown in the above section on decision-making, our making choices that lead to our well-being will not only improve our own life, it can dramatically improve our community, and with enough of us choosing happiness, our whole world.

There are many books and articles that suggest things to do to become happier, The exercises included below are recommended by positive psychologists Martin Seligman and Sonya Lyubomirsky based on the effectiveness each exercise has shown in increasing well-being. The “nine choices of extremely happy people” mapped by Foster and Hicks provide an alternative approach to achieving well-being which I find to be both consistent with and complimentary to the aforementioned exercises.

### **3.7.1. Determining the Best Well-Being Activities for You**

When choosing which activities to try, or to incorporate into your routine, it is important to choose those which are most likely to feel natural, enjoyable and/or valuable since these are the ones we are most likely to follow through with and incorporate into our routine. Lyubomirsky actually includes a “Person-Activity Fit Diagnostic”<sup>87</sup> as a precursor to the activities she recommends. The questionnaire recommends subtracting the average of the more *external* reasons for doing the activity (guilt or situational requirements – including the wishes of others) from the average of the more *internal* reasons listed above. She then recommends focusing on some of the four highest ranking activities, depending on what feels doable.

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87. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 73.



The idea is to have fun with this...not to make it one more thing you have to do. It helps if you can let yourself be in that childlike place of play, silliness, and wonder. Lyubomirsky even discusses the corniness factor.<sup>88</sup> She notes two things about this. First, it's natural for some of the activities to feel kind of silly or insincere and there are many choices...so you can skip activities that feel too uncomfortable to you. Second, if you can do such an uncomfortable activity anyway, you may find you come to genuinely appreciate it.

### **3.7.2. Kindness**

According to Seligman's testing, the single most reliable activity to provide a momentary increase of well-being is to do a *kindness* for someone else.<sup>89</sup> It doesn't seem to matter whether the recipient is aware of who did it or not, and it doesn't need to be a big deal. It can be as simple as donating blood or feeding someone's parking meter. Lyubomirsky notes that doing acts of kindness on a regular basis extends the period of the effect and also that the acts must remain meaningful, not just be one more thing on our "to do" list.<sup>90</sup> Thus the bumper sticker "Practice *Random Acts of Kindness*..." Other warnings she adds include: "helping" where it's not wanted isn't helpful, it's disrespectful; expecting thanks or reward for a kindness will likely cause you to feel resentment rather than well-being and kindness to others needs to honor our own self-care needs or it may actually be detrimental to our well-being.<sup>91</sup> We are living in a culture where self-care is often portrayed as a negative behavior..."selfish." While there are certainly times when we may choose to put other's needs first, for example when a child is hurt or scared, it is

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88. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 72.

89. Seligman, *Flourish*, 20.

90. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 129.

91. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 136.

my experience that we can not consistently bring our best to anyone else, or achieve optimal well-being, unless we practice exceptional self-care.

### **3.7.3. Gratitude**

Gratitude takes many forms and several have been tested for their impact on our well-being, including the exercises included below. Lyubomirsky points out eight ways gratitude improves our well-being:<sup>92</sup> It helps us to savor positive life experiences. It bolsters self-esteem. It helps us cope with stress and trauma. It encourages moral behavior. It builds and strengthens social bonds. It inhibits comparisons with others. It inhibits and deters “negative” emotions such as anger, fear, and resentment. Gratitude even thwarts hedonic adaptation by keeping us from taking the people, places, and things in our life for granted.

Two basic forms of gratitude activities include the *Three Blessings* and the *Gratitude Visit*. The Three Blessings exercise suggests that each night you write down three things that went well for you that day and why you think they went well.<sup>93</sup> For the Gratitude Visit or Letter, think of someone who really impacted your life in a positive way and write a letter detailing what they did that impacted your life and how grateful you are. You may choose to mail the letter, or not, or you may choose to hand carry the letter and read it to them.<sup>94</sup>

As with many of these exercises, it's important to avoid doing them by rote, for maximum benefit you need to be engaged. It may be helpful to vary how or how frequently you do them. While it's common to say thank you, we often don't pause long

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92. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 92.

93. Seligman, *Flourish*, 33.

94. Seligman, *Flourish*, 30; and Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 97.

enough to really feel and express our gratitude deeply. Just taking an extra moment to pause and say “thank you,” rather than saying it in passing, as we so often do, can make it more meaningful to both parties. Some of us are accustomed to giving thanks before a meal...how much more meaningful it becomes when we take a deep breath and speak from our heart rather than speaking a rote prayer we've been saying for years.

#### **3.7.4. Strengths**

One of the focal points of positive psychology is optimizing our strengths. Our *signature strengths*<sup>95</sup> are those that we identify with in a powerful way: we feel ownership and authenticity, like this strength is a real part of us; it's exciting to display it; we learn quickly as we first use it; we desire to find new ways to use it; and we are committed to using the strength. Once we identify our signature strengths – the top 5 or so – through the questionnaire<sup>96</sup> the Signature Strengths Exercise suggests you create a designated time in your schedule to exercise one or more of your signature strengths in a new way and then write in detail about your experience. Twenty-four strengths, in six categories, have been identified:

##### *Wisdom and Knowledge*

- Curiosity/Interest in the World
- Love of Learning
- Judgment/Critical Thinking/Open-Mindedness
- Ingenuity/Originality/Practical Intelligence/Street Smarts
- Social Intelligence/Personal Intelligence/Emotional Intelligence
- Perspective

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95. Seligman, *Flourish*, 38-39.

96. Seligman, *Flourish*, 243; and [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org). Note that the book version of this questionnaire provides much greater explanation and may be more accurate as it provides two questions per strength.

### Courage

- Valor and Bravery
- Perseverance/Industry/Diligence
- Integrity/Genuineness/Honesty

### Humanity and Love

- Kindness and Generosity
- Loving and Allowing Oneself to Be Loved

### Justice

- Citizenship/Duty/Teamwork/Loyalty
- Fairness and Equity
- Leadership

### Temperance

- Self-Control
- Prudence/Discretion/Caution
- Humility and Modesty

### Transcendence

- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
- Gratitude
- Hope/Optimism/Future-Mindedness
- Spirituality/Sense of Purpose/Faith/Religiousness
- Forgiveness and Mercy
- Playfulness and Humor
- Zest/Passion/Enthusiasm

It is often while using our signature strengths that we experience engagement. How long the likely experience of increased well-being lasts is related to how long you continue to perform the exercise.

### 3.7.5. Active, Constructive Responding

*Active, Constructive Responding*<sup>97</sup> is not just an exercise, it becomes a life skill once you catch on. While much marriage counseling focuses on learning to fight more constructively, how we celebrate is more predictive of strong relationships. When a loved one shares a victory or a stroke of luck, our response can either build or undermine our relationship. The exercise entails listening intently when a loved one shares something positive that happened to them. Respond positively and enthusiastically; ask them to relive it with you; the more time reliving – and responding – the better. Hunt all week for positive events and record them nightly in a table with columns for (1) Other's Event, (2) My Response (verbatim), and (3) Other's Response to Me. This will provide a quick and simple review of your experiences throughout the week.

You can prepare for this exercise by thinking about recent events that were shared with you and how you might have responded. You can also spend five minute each morning visualizing who you might see and what good things they might tell you about themselves.

It will take some effort, and once it becomes a habit, active, constructive responding is self-maintaining. Relationships are a major part of well-being. Engaging more fully with your loved ones using active, constructive responding is likely to be a triple winner – your relationships will improve and both you and your loved one are likely to experience increased well-being.

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97. Seligman, *Flourish*, 48-51.

### 3.7.6. Additional Exercises

You get the idea...here are brief descriptions of a few more exercises you might find improve your well-being:

- Cultivate Optimism<sup>98</sup> – look on the brights side; notice what's right (rather than wrong); imagine, write and/or talk about your best possible self.
- Avoiding Overthinking and Social Comparison<sup>99</sup> – stop...is there an appropriate action to take?...what are the triggers?’
- Nurture Relationships<sup>100</sup> - make time; admiration, appreciation, affection; celebrate; manage conflict; share your inner lives.
- Coping Strategies<sup>101</sup> - managing stress and trauma through social support, writing, allowing our feelings, problem solving, finding meaning and opportunity,...
- Forgiveness<sup>102</sup> - “Resentments are like drinking poison and expecting the other person to get sick.”<sup>103</sup> Forgiveness is for *ourselves*. It doesn't mean tolerating unacceptable behavior; nor does it mean absolving another of the consequences of their actions; nor is there a specific time by which you should “*get over it.*” Forgiveness is very personal and, while it may not always be easy, the benefits are proven to be substantial.
- Increasing *Flow* Experiences<sup>104</sup> – flow, or engagement, is that sense of timelessness we feel when we are totally present and focused. It generally arises when we are using our strengths and skills on a task that is challenging, yet not overwhelming. Note: it is important that we remember to take care of ourselves and attend to other areas of our lives rather than just seek flow experiences. Pursuing flow for flow itself, without discerning how it impacts the rest of our life, may increase our momentary happiness but decrease our overall well-being.
- Savoring joys<sup>105</sup> - relish ordinary experiences; reminisce; celebrate; be mindful; experience through your senses; record with photos or journaling.

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98. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 101.

99. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 112.

100. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 141.

101. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 151.

102. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 169.

103. I have heard statements like this at Al-Anon meetings numerous times.

104. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 181.

105. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 190.

- Pursuing *your* goals<sup>106</sup> - imagining your best self and selecting goals to help you get there is a good place to start.
- Spirituality and religion<sup>107</sup> - the key is to be genuine...find the spiritual practice, religious tradition and/or community that resonates and fits who you are and what you believe.
- Taking care of your body – meditation,<sup>108</sup> physical activity and rest,<sup>109</sup> acting happy,<sup>110</sup> etc.

While the above activities have all been scientifically proven to have positive effects on our well-being, they are certainly not the only activities which will do so.

Bringing our choice making to a conscious level and simply taking a moment to think and feel about the activity we are considering will help us to choose the activity which will increase our well-being before, during and after we do it.

### **3.7.7. The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People**

Rick Foster and Greg Hicks have taken an entirely different approach to finding what makes us happy. Their original intent was simply to compile the stories of one hundred extremely happy people. The way they selected these people was to ask people they knew, or met, around the world to name the happiest person they know. Often they would ask a variety of people and when several people named the same person, they would request an interview. They found that happy people are very welcoming and trusting and were happy to make time to talk with them. They also found that, while life circumstances and other details might vary, the day to day choices extremely happy people make are very similar. So their anthology of the stories of one hundred extremely

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106. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 205.

107. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 228.

108. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 240.

109. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 244.

110. Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness*, 250.

happy people became instead *How We Choose to Be Happy: The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People – Their Secrets, Their Stories*. The remainder of this section summarizes what they found.

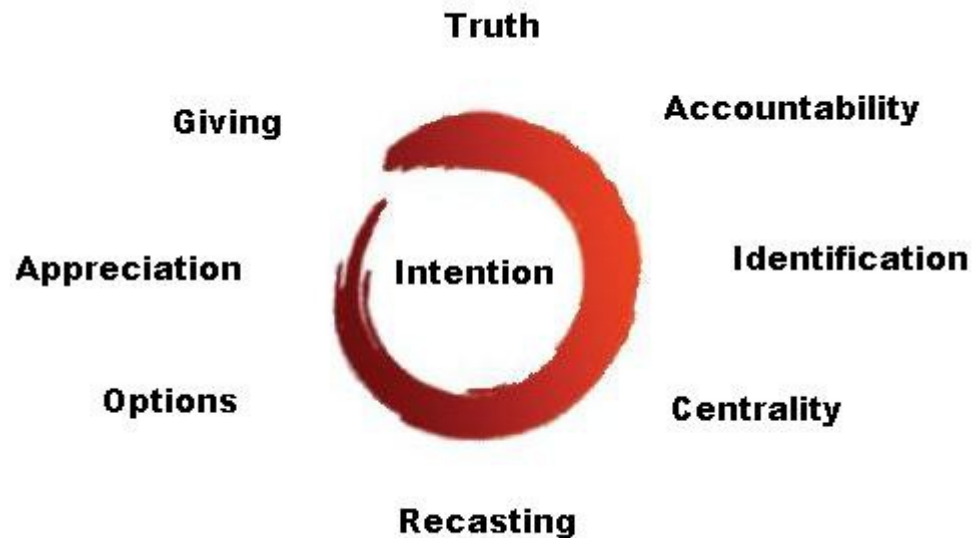


Figure 3.3. The Nine Choices of Extremely Happy People. Adapted from Rick Foster and Greg Hicks, *How We Choose to Be Happy: The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People-- Their Secrets, Their Stories* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1999), 11 and "Introduction," Sustainable Happiness Course, accessed March 27, 2014, [www.sustainablehappinesscourse.com/introduction/](http://www.sustainablehappinesscourse.com/introduction/).

The choices extremely happy people make – and the actions they take – begin with *intention*. Extremely happy people maintain an intention and commitment to be happy and to consciously choose decisions and behaviors that will fulfill that intention.

Extremely happy people do not perceive themselves as victims – they blame no one. They choose to be *accountable* in every area of their lives and take full responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions.

Extremely happy people take the time and make a point to *identify* what makes them happy on an ongoing basis. They then make these activities *central* to their lives, without apology or negotiation.



When unpleasant, or even traumatic, events happen to extremely happy people, they follow a process called *recasting*. First, they feel their feelings deeply and completely, and continue to do so whenever they arise. They honor them and follow their feelings in a conscious search for meaning and purpose. Finally, they seek out the learning, growth and opportunity that every experience offers.

Extremely happy people are always open to the unexpected. They look for and embrace *options* and flow with life in all its possibilities.

Not surprisingly, gratitude and kindness, which have been proven to be so key to our well-being by positive psychologists, are also key choices of extremely happy people. Extremely happy people *appreciate* each moment and each person in their life and make a point of staying present and treating them as precious. Extremely happy people also *give* of themselves to their loved ones and community without expectation of return.

The final quality and choice of extremely happy people is *truthfulness* – to be honest with one's self and to continually maintain one's commitment to that which creates happiness. While not explicitly stated as an activity in positive psychology, the integrity and authenticity that Foster and Hicks speak of is noted as key to virtually every activity recommended...it is the essence of *intrinsic* – personally driven – happiness and well-being.

*Happiness depends upon ourselves.*<sup>111</sup>

~ Aristotle

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111. Aristotle. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2014. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/aristotle138768.html>, accessed August 11, 2014.

## CHAPTER 4

### TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY AND WELL-BEING

#### 4.1. Teaching Sustainability

Initial efforts toward teaching sustainability were generally focused in the Environmental Sciences curriculum at all grade levels – applying science to why we need to live sustainably and what living sustainably entails. More recent trends recognize that sustainability is interdependent with every area of our lives and include focused work within other disciplines (e.g., economics or psychology), community engagement and interdisciplinary, or even transdisciplinary,<sup>112</sup> efforts.

One example of such a model has been developed and implemented by the *Curriculum for the Bioregion* initiated by *The Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education*. Working with committee members from nine community colleges and nine four-year institutions in the Puget Sound Bioregion, as well as environmental and civic education groups, and the program officer from their funder (the Russell Foundation), *Curriculum for the Bioregion* (See Figure 4.1) sought to develop “new curricula that make sustainability meaningful to students, without duplicating the efforts of campus operations.”<sup>113</sup>

This strategy focuses on strengthening the educational community – both within and across disciplines and including the broader community – around the learning, teaching, and living of sustainability. Faculty are encouraged to approach the necessary

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112. *Interdisciplinary* denotes combining two or more academic disciplines in approaching a problem; *transdisciplinary* denotes creating a holistic approach from crossing many disciplinary boundaries. Source: en.wikipedia.org accessed July 10, 2014.

113. Jean MacGregor, “Curriculum for the Bioregion: Putting Communities and Ideas in Place,” in *Sustainability in Higher Education: Stories and Strategies for Transformation*, ed. Peggy F. Barlett and Geoffrey W. Chase (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 67-80.

## The Curriculum for the Bioregion Strategy:

Linking and Building  
Communities of Educators

[www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/bioregion](http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/bioregion)



Figure 4.1. Foci of the Curriculum for the Bioregion Strategy. Jean MacGregor, “Curriculum for the Bioregion: Putting Communities and Ideas in Place,” in *Sustainability in Higher Education: Stories and Strategies for Transformation*, ed. Peggy F. Barlett and Geoffrey W. Chase (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 75; and <http://bioregion.evergreen.edu/docs/c4bbubblechart.pdf> accessed July 10, 2014.

shifts in curriculum by envisioning the “big ideas” critical to each course's content and including sustainability among them. The idea is to address the discipline specific essential content either in the context of sustainability or integrated with a sustainability concept, ideally in a manner that promotes deeper understanding of the bioregion.

While many of the campuses in the bioregion already had strong commitments to interdisciplinary teaching and learning, it was recognized that existing efforts were not sufficient to make the deep changes that the initiative intended. Daniel Sherman of

University of Puget Sound stated it clearly: “If we are to make any progress, sustainability has to have meaning and resonance in all of our disciplines...We won't change the academy unless every discipline sees the relevance of sustainability ideas.”<sup>114</sup>

This idea was repeated many times throughout the book *Sustainability in Higher Education* from which this example is drawn. There is a deep understanding that the work of sustainability is *adaptive* work – work that is so complex and so continuously evolving that solutions are often elusive.<sup>115</sup> Another repeated idea is that it is not just curricular transformation that is necessary – to transform the curriculum in a useful and believable way, the entire faculty must transform as well.

#### **4.2. Teaching Well-Being**

Teaching happiness and well-being is a relatively new outgrowth of the revival of positive psychology which has occurred over the last several decades. Such teaching is occurring at all educational levels and may be integrated within other courses and disciplines or it may be the primary focus of a course. While far from widespread in the U.S., teaching well-being is now an “integral part of the national curriculum in England and Wales.”<sup>116</sup>

Ian Morris, a long-time educator in Great Britain, recommends teaching well-being according to a curriculum model he calls the “spider's web.”<sup>117</sup> This model, represented in Figure 4.2, is intended to provide a useful pattern to guide schools in

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114. MacGregor, Curriculum for the Bioregion, 74.

115. MacGregor, Curriculum for the Bioregion, 79.

116. Richard Layard, Preface to *Teaching Happiness and Well-Being in Schools : Learning to Ride Elephants*, by Ian Morris (London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2009), 9, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/maine/docDetail.action?docID=10488196>.

117. Ian Morris, *Teaching Happiness and Well-Being in Schools : Learning to Ride Elephants* (London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2009), 209, accessed July 11, 2014, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/maine/docDetail.action?docID=10488196>.

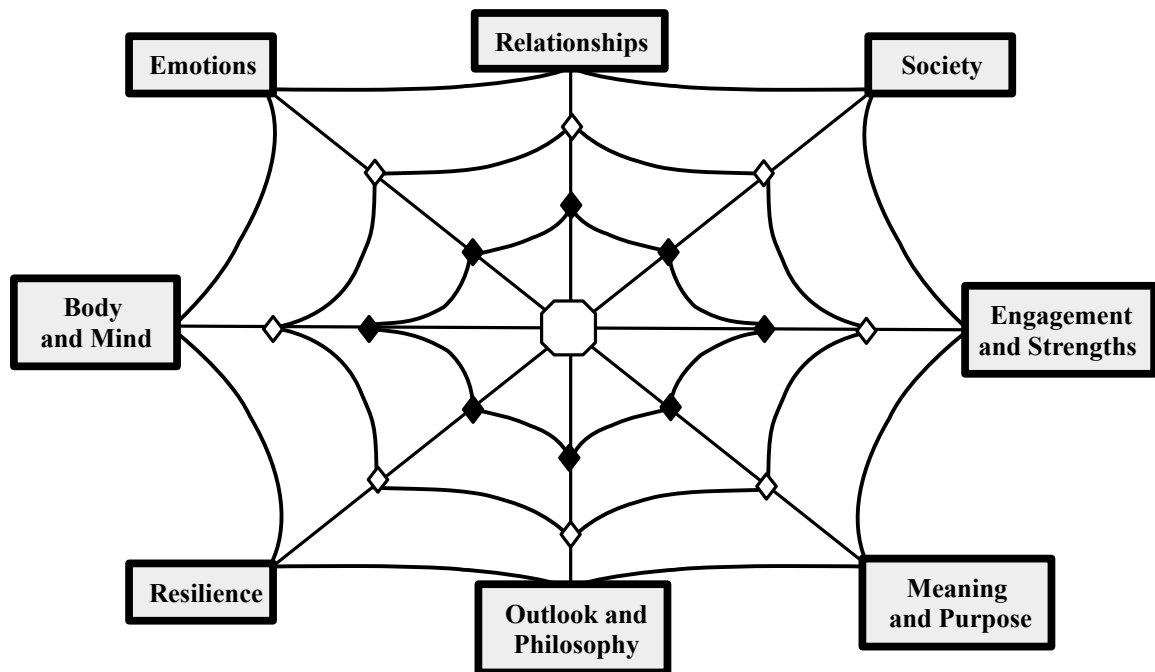


Figure 4.2. Spider's Web Well-Being Curriculum Model. Ian Morris, *Teaching Happiness and Well-Being in Schools : Learning to Ride Elephants* (London, GBR: Continuum International Publishing, 2009), 209, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/maine/docDetail.action?docID=10488196>.

developing specific curriculum according to their resources, lesson length and schedule, and the needs of their community.

The use of the spider's web in modeling well-being curriculum enables one to envision how the student, in the center of the web, builds skills as they progress through curriculum modules (represented by diamonds on the intersections of the web). Equally as important, we can see how exploring topics in one area of well-being necessarily relate to all the other areas. Well-being is intimately connected with how we live life, and life is full of interrelated experiences.

The order and specific content of the curriculum modules can be as stable or dynamic as serves the styles and needs of both teacher and students. There can be set

lessons offered in a set pattern or called upon as situations call for, or there can be fluid lessons customized to whatever circumstances arise in the classroom or in students' lives.

### 4.3. Teaching Well-Being and Sustainability Together

Well-being and sustainability are not only interdependent and regenerative in their relationship to one another, they are also quite similar in their relationship to the rest of our lives. Both impact every area of our lives and world and are impacted by them. For full effect and the kind of all encompassing transition that growing numbers of people believe is necessary, each of these topics needs to be deeply embedded across our entire curriculum.

These are some of the reasons why teaching well-being and sustainability go hand in hand. Einstein said “We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”<sup>118</sup> Learning to optimize our well-being enables us to approach the challenges of moving toward sustainability with creativity and a collaborative spirit.<sup>119</sup>

Canadian educator Catherine O'Brien, of Cape Breton University, has been at the forefront of linking well-being and sustainability. In 2005, she introduced the concept of *sustainable happiness* – “happiness that contributes to personal, community, and/or global well-being without exploiting other people, the environment, or future generations.”<sup>120</sup> Cape Breton University began offering a Sustainable Happiness elective class within their Bachelor of Education program in 2009. This class meets many of the

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118. “Collected Quotes from Albert Einstein,” accessed July 11, 2014, <http://rescomp.stanford.edu/~cheshire/EinsteinQuotes.html>.

119. See the previous section on the *Benefits of Well-Being*.

120. Catherine O'Brien, "Sustainability, happiness and education." *Journal of Sustainability Education* 1 (May 2010): 2, accessed July 12, 2014, [http://sustainablehappiness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Sustainability-Happ-Educ\\_JSE.pdf](http://sustainablehappiness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Sustainability-Happ-Educ_JSE.pdf).

recommendations outlined by UNESCO in their 2005 *Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability*.<sup>121</sup> Beyond meeting the guidelines, initial student reflection indicated fundamental shifts in perspective and expansion in their sustainable behavior. “Sustainable happiness has been incorporated into post-secondary courses at Cape Breton University, UC Berkeley’s School of Public Health, and Stanford University.”<sup>122</sup>

Efforts that are being made in education toward happiness and sustainability at all levels indicate that we are on the right track. The challenge remains to integrate the teaching of sustainability and happiness throughout our educational system. Ideally – in my opinion – teachers at all levels, and in all subjects, will begin learning the fundamental concepts of well-being and sustainability, integrating them into their lives, and including them as an essential core of their classes. Strategies such as those discussed in the previous sections of this chapter are adaptable to most situations. A key seems to be recognizing, communicating and building on existing faculty interest and knowledge, and that of students, staff, and the broader community, to extend the learning and teaching capacity of the entire faculty. Many – and growing – resources are available on line at websites such as:

- The U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development - <http://www.uspartnership.org>
- The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education - <http://www.aashe.org>
- <http://sustainablehappiness.ca/>

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121. O’Brien, "Sustainability, happiness and education," 13.

122. “Catherine O’Brien - Sustainable Happiness,” accessed July 25, 2014, <http://sustainablehappiness.ca/>.

- University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center - <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>
- Mental Health in Higher Education Hub (U.K.) - <http://mhhehub.ning.com>
- <http://www.projecthappiness.com/>

The personal rewards in the area of well-being may be an easier “sell” to start with and increasing the well-being of faculty members is likely to expand their capacity to actively participate in addressing other necessary change. The chapter on non-credit applications of the proposed well-being curriculum is particularly applicable to serving the needs of faculty and staff.

Such a complete shift in faculty perspectives and in curriculum will take time and commitment. In the meantime, expanding existing efforts by introducing focused classes on well-being and sustainability, especially as part of the core curriculum, will begin the shift of our learning institutions from a role as “part of the problem,” as concluded in UNESCO's 2005 report,<sup>123</sup> toward becoming a part of the solution.

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123. UNESCO, *Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability*. Education for Sustainable Development in Action. Technical Paper No. 2 (2005), 57, accessed July 12, 2014, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370E.pdf>.



**CHAPTER 5**  
**RESOURCES AND FRAMEWORKS AVAILABLE**  
**TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED CURRICULUM**

**5.1. Instructor Qualifications**

**5.1.1. Personal Qualifications**

The instructor of this course must be fully committed to, and engaged in, their own life and holistic well-being. This is difficult for another to judge – the journey of holistic well-being is a personal process which we choose, or feel forced by illness and dis-ease, to embark upon and each of us must find our own unique approach to it.

That said, it is my experience that such people are likely to be found on the margins and in the in-between places...not fully engaged in the quest for tenure or external success and often not supported by the dominant culture and institutional structures. We are likely to be women, and/or of minority heritage. Often we have experienced violence or other personal or cultural trauma, disability, illness, or disease. We are likely to be committed to serving our community as peace workers, healers, spiritual leaders, and/or bridgers and translators between cultures, disciplines, communities, and institutions.

The pedagogy for the proposed course is experiential and introspective, as well as academic. If one is to guide students through this exploration, one needs to be familiar with the challenges that arise and sensitive to the needs of themselves as well as their students. This is truly a class where the instructor must lead by example and be willing to share their personal experience. We are asking students to undertake a physical, emotional, and spiritual exploration, as well as an intellectual one. We must remember

how scary, exhausting, and exhilarating, this process can be. We must also be aware of resources which are accessible to students and may ease their stress and facilitate their journey. As those of us who have undertaken such a journey are well aware, a community and support system are critical to the relative ease, and perhaps even the success, of this journey. A large part of this class will be helping students to overcome both the *practice* of dependence on institutions and the *idea* of independence so often stressed in this culture, as well as creating safe space for them to be vulnerable and develop a healthy sense of interdependence and interconnection with their classmates and community.

### **5.1.2. A Personal Example**

I offer a glimpse into my own life to provide an example of the type of personal work a teacher of this class may have undertaken. My personal journey toward holistic well-being began in 1990 when my response to the trauma of my own upbringing in domestic violence and male domination began to seriously interfere with my career as a computer programmer. My manager recognized that I was experiencing severe stress and recommended I see his therapist. About the same time, the director of our department recommended I see his massage therapist for a minor structural injury to my hand that allopathic medicine was not effectively addressing. Thus, I was drawn into both the emotional and physical aspects of well-being. Since then I have become increasingly committed to my holistic well-being. In 2002, I realized that the one area which I had been unable to fully address was my spirituality...I just couldn't work forty hours per week, make myself healthy food, exercise, attend to my relationships with my self, partner, friends and family, and fully commit to a spiritual path. I didn't even feel I had

the time to *find* my spiritual path. So when I left Portland, ME and moved to Virginia, it was with a commitment to only work part time so that I could really explore my spirituality. This proved to be a good move for me. The physical space from my family allowed me to take my healing around my childhood to new levels. By working for holistic health practices, I was able to receive and learn a variety of modalities. Most importantly, I connected with a spiritual mentor and community that I found nurturing. The training I received as a ceremonial pipe carrier and as a sweat lodge facilitator included not only a commitment to serve the people and All My Relations, it also required me to deepen my practice of self-care in order that I might bring my best to my community.

When I became romantically involved with a person addicted to marijuana, I followed the advice of my mentor and other friends to attend Al-Anon. My initial *qualifier* (loved one with alcohol/drug problem) had been my grandfather. Which meant my entire family qualified for Al-Anon. No one else in our family, to my knowledge, had ever intentionally dealt with the impacts of addiction, and the related dysfunction, in our lives. It is barely discussed. I have found Al-Anon to be consistent with all I have come to recognize as truth and it provides me tools and community to develop the skills necessary for a sane and happy life.

My return to academic study after twenty-five years has severely tested my well-being skills and commitment. I was clear that it would not serve me to work while carrying a full course load. I did keep my well-being as a priority in my life, and for the most part maintained my spiritual practice, regular Al-Anon attendance, healthy eating, etc. I accepted “incomplete” grades on some of my courses when my life and learning

process did not fit within the academic calendar. I also sometimes ignored my own needs and inner wisdom to try to meet my perceptions of other people's expectations and desires. Well-being is truly a “progress not perfection” undertaking and I am grateful for the progress I continue to make and for the awareness of where my well-being work lies – maintaining my commitment to my own well-being, wisdom, and guidance, in spite of other people's expectations and judgments (real or imagined).

### **5.1.3. Professional Qualifications**

While I feel that the *personal* qualifications for teaching this course are far more important than the professional, every institution has their requirements for credentialing and beyond. Within those requirements, it is suggested that instructors have education and experience in one or more of the following: interdisciplinary efforts, positive psychology, sustainability, Peace Studies, Native American Studies, permaculture, or others which can be shown to relate to the pedagogy or course content.

## **5.2. External Resources**

Each of us has lived a different life and draws from different traditions and resources. While we may encourage our students to explore a wide variety of tools, some of which are not part of our personal practice, it is important that we be willing to share deeply about what does work for us. This sharing must be done in a manner of exploration rather than judgment. We are not proselytizing, we are instead sharing our personal experience and inviting our students to find what works for them. The resources discussed below have been useful in my journey and are also readily available within, or near, most university communities. The value each of these resources provides arises not from developing a strictly academic understanding of their content but from

experiencing, contemplating, and analyzing their application to our own lives until their philosophies, concepts, and way of perceiving begin to become an integrated part of our being.

### **5.2.1. Al-Anon**

*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

*~ adapted by Alcoholics Anonymous from the original by Reinhold Niebuhr ~*

Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship of people who recognize they have been affected by the use of alcohol of a family member or friend. While this is the stated intention, many of us find our way to Al-Anon because of our loved ones other addictions, or perhaps because we recognize that “our lives have become unmanageable,”<sup>124</sup> even if we are not aware of any loved ones with a drinking problem. All of the meetings I have attended have been welcoming, regardless of what brings us there...each individual is expected to determine for themselves if Al-Anon may be helpful. It is suggested that we attended 6-8 meetings before deciding, ideally at more than one place or time. For those of us who do not find it appropriate to attend meetings, there is a wealth of written material and podcasts for free download or purchase available at <http://al-anon.alateen.org>, as well as dozens of YouTube videos (look for the Al-Anon

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124. Al-Anon Step 1: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.” To make this step feel more applicable to our lives, particularly when we don't have an active alcoholic in them, we often replace the term “alcohol” with “people, places, and things.”

symbol – a blue triangle with a white circle in the middle – for Al-Anon generated videos).

I am no expert on alcoholism or other addictions, nor am I an expert or spokesperson for Al-Anon. I am simply a person who recognizes the impact the disease of alcoholism and addiction has had on my life. I can only share my own hope, strength and experience. Appendix B includes the Al-Anon guideline for “A Meeting on Wheels” as well as a document containing the Al-Anon Concepts and Warranties. “A Meeting on Wheels” contains the 12-steps and traditions, as adapted from AA, as well as the suggested opening and closing for an Al-Anon meeting.

The Steps help us learn how to love ourselves, trust our Higher Power, and begin to heal our relationships with others. The Traditions show us how to build healthy relationships within our groups, among our friends, and in our families. The Concepts help us extend all that we learn to the world at large - our families, jobs, organizations, and communities.<sup>125</sup>

Al-Anon is a spiritual program. It does not promote any particular creed or dogma, and in fact great effort is applied to ensure that all feel welcome. We speak of the God of *our understanding*, sometimes called our *higher power*. We also are told, in the suggested closing, to “take what you liked and leave the rest.” Through the sharing of others at meetings, and member to member, we learn to make the program our own...even the sometimes troubling concept of a higher power has been resolved by members through envisioning the group, Nature, or even their dog.

Many find that learning that we are not alone in our suffering provides great comfort. We are told in the suggested welcome that “no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is

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125. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, *Paths to Recovery: Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (Virginia Beach, VA: Al-Anon Family Groups, 1997), XIII.

still drinking or not.” We learn bit by bit that we are powerless over alcohol, and over much else in life, too. While many of us have attempted to control the uncontrollable, we learn instead to “change the things we can.” By keeping the focus on ourselves and the things that *are* ours to control – our thinking and our behavior – we gradually make progress toward a sane and satisfying life.

Al-Anon has provided me with a step-by-step program for living...I may not use it perfectly, but I have it. It has also helped me learn how to make lasting change – slowly and gently, sometimes without even realizing that it's happening. While it is a spiritual program, it is also a holistic program. It reminds me that I must take care of all aspects of myself – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – if I want to live a healthy and happy life. The addictions, and resulting dysfunction, prevalent in our society are but symptoms of our unhappiness. Al-Anon is one tool available to help us heal our wounds and achieve our well-being.

### **5.2.2. Permaculture<sup>126</sup>**

Permaculture provides a sufficiently complete, clear, and flexible framework to serve as a primary pedagogy. However, since permaculture study is most frequently pursued for its gardening and *physical* sustainability applications and it is often applied in these realms without consciously applying it to the *personal* or *social* realms, I leave it as a resource. It is critical that individuals be actively committed to their own self-awareness, healing and self-development – and have considerable experience doing so – before they consider themselves capable of instructing a course such as I am proposing.

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126. In addition to my 2013 Permaculture Design Course through The Resilience Hub, and many other conversations and personal explorations, sources for this discussion of permaculture include: Toby Hemenway, *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture* (White River Junction, Vt: Chelsea Green Pub, 2009); and Looby Macnamara, *People & Permaculture: Caring and Designing for Ourselves, Each Other and the Planet* (East Meon, Hampshire, England: Permanent Publications, 2012).

The term permaculture was originally coined from “permanent agriculture.” As permaculture was found to be applicable to all realms of life, permaculture has come to reference “permanent culture.” Permaculture arose from the observation that, left to its own devices, nature is constantly regenerating itself. Permaculture guides us to mimic nature through applying its ethics and principles to the various domains of our lives and world. Figure 5.1 shows one representation of these domains.

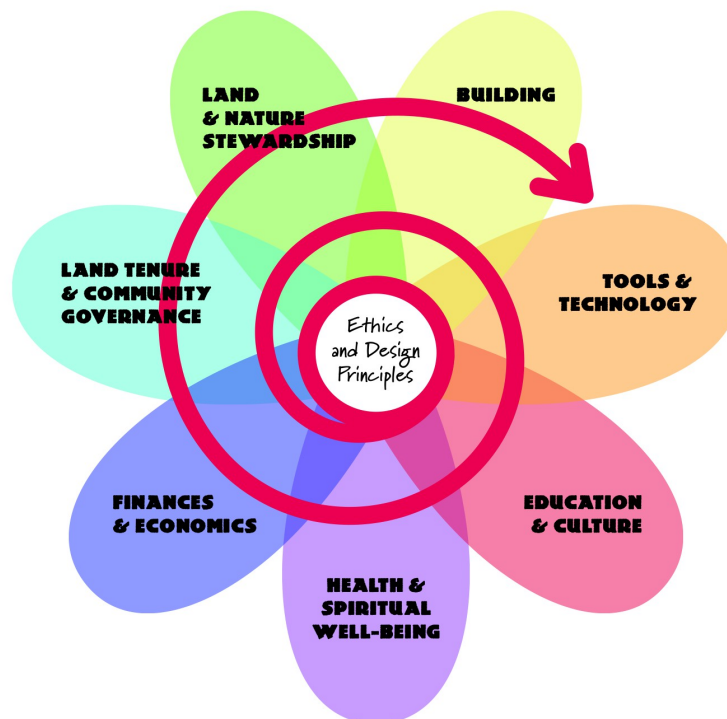


Figure 5.1. Permaculture Flower - Domains of Sustainable Culture. Source: an excerpt of David Holmgren's graphic, accessed July 16, 2014, [http://permacultureprinciples.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/shop\\_flower\\_poster\\_800s.jpg](http://permacultureprinciples.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/shop_flower_poster_800s.jpg)

One of the methods used to think about these domains, and about particular design projects, is zones. Zones arise from a combination of location and use. Zones generally move outward from the self (zone 00) and this may vary according to a given situation. In physical designs, we consider:



- zone 0 to be the inside of one's home;
- zone 1 the area right near the home where we might plant things that we use frequently – like kitchen herbs; that need to be harvested or tended frequently, or that we like to enjoy frequently, like our barbeque area and favorite flowers;
- zone 2 is out just a bit more and may include vegetables that need fairly regular observance but less intensive management than those planted in zone 1, like beans and peas, and animals that need daily tending such as chickens;
- zone 3 consists of longer term crops like corn or pumpkins and self-feeding animals such as beef cattle;
- zone 4 is tended minimally for wild harvesting – native nuts, berries, mushrooms, wood for fuel or lumber, etc.;
- zone 5 is a wild area, perhaps managed to minimize undesired events such as fires, flooding, drought or pollution, and to connect with other wild areas or provide wildlife corridors.

Zones are meant as useful guidelines and there is a great deal of flexibility in their implementation. When we are looking at the more social aspects of life, the same theory applies. Moving out from the self (zone 00)<sup>127</sup>:

- zone 0 is usually ones immediate family...people who live together;
- zone 1 generally includes friends and other family;
- zone 2 likely includes neighbors, colleagues, team or group members and other acquaintances with whom a common bond is shared;
- zone 3 may include one's town, county, and state, shared cultures, etc.;
- zone 4 is national;
- zone 5 is global.

Figure 5.2 shows David Holmgren's permaculture ethics, principles, and proverbs.

The ethics of permaculture: earth care, people care, and fair share might be seen as an alternative to what is commonly considered sustainability's triple bottom line. The difference being that in permaculture, economics are seen as part of people care.

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127. Looby Macnamara, *People & Permaculture: Caring and Designing for Ourselves, Each Other and the Planet* (East Meon, Hampshire, England: Permanent Publications, 2012), 41-43.

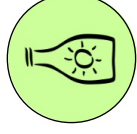
**12. Creatively use & respond to change**  
 (Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be)

**11. Use edges & value the marginal**  
 (Don't think you're on the right track just because it's a well-beaten path)



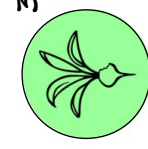
**1. Observe & interact**  
 (Beauty is in the eye of the beholder)

**10. Use & value diversity**  
 (Don't put all your eggs in one basket)



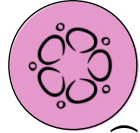
**2. Catch & store energy**  
 (Make hay while the sun shines)

**9. Use small & slow solutions**  
 (Slow and steady wins the race. The bigger they are the harder they fall)

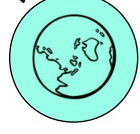


**3. Obtain a yield**  
 (You can't work on an empty stomach)

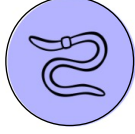
**8. Integrate rather than segregate**  
 (Many hands make light work)



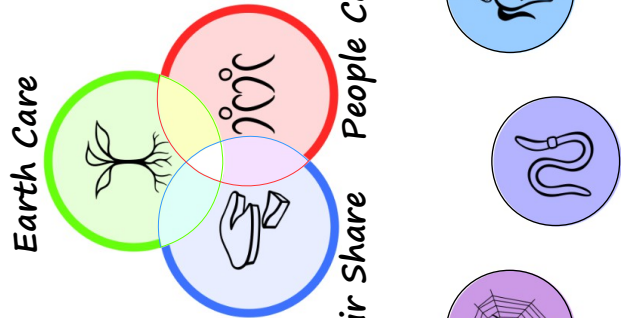
**4. Apply self-regulation & accept feedback**  
 (The sins of our fathers are visited unto the seventh generation)



**7. Design from patterns to detail**  
 (Can't see the wood for the trees)



**5. Use & value renewable resources & services**  
 (Let nature take its course)



**6. Produce no waste**  
 (Waste not, want not. A stitch in time saves nine.)

Figure 5.2 Permaculture Ethics, Principles and Proverbs. From David Holmgren's *Permaculture Ethics and Design Principles Poster*, accessed July 16, 2014, [http://permacultureprinciples.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/shop\\_principles\\_poster\\_800s1.jpg](http://permacultureprinciples.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/shop_principles_poster_800s1.jpg)

The balance offered by the permaculture ethics provides a vital foundation: humans are no more or less important than the earth, environment and other species. The ethic of fair share...based on true *need*, not want, guides the allocation of resources of all forms. This is an area most of us from the developed world must work to get honest about. We often mistake our chosen *strategy* for meeting a need as a the need itself. I may say “I need to go to the beach.” This is a strategy that may fulfill a variety of my needs: play, exercise, spiritual connection, beauty, peace, rest. While I find spending time at the ocean is very nourishing, there are many people who live their lives without ever seeing the ocean. It is an effective *strategy* for me to meet many needs and it is not a *need* itself. See The Well-being Toolkit in Appendix E for a discussion and list of feelings and needs.

There are two key permaculture concepts that are worth looking at before we explore the principles: *stacking functions* and *leverage points*. In nature, every element serves multiple functions and every function is performed by multiple elements...systems where this is not the case are extremely vulnerable and often fail. My trip to the beach is an example of a stacking function...look at all the needs I fulfill with one trip to the beach! Nature's movement of water is another: below ground, through aquifers; at the surface through streams, rivers, and lakes; and above ground by evaporation forming clouds which may then travel miles before depositing their precipitation.

Leverage points refer to the place in a system where we can make a relatively small change which dramatically effects the overall system. When I think of a leverage point for our well-being – one small thing a person can do to improve their well-being – I think of increasing the amount of water they are drinking. The majority of Americans are

dehydrated.<sup>128</sup> Since humans are about 60% water (75% in our muscles, 85% in our brains) this can affect everything from our energy level to our ability to think clearly. Working toward a goal of drinking 10 cups per day (or half our body weight in ounces...10 cups if we weigh 160 pounds) can make a tremendous difference in our well-being.

The permaculture principles can be applied to every area of our life and community – from our selves to our home, business, and beyond. When I look at how I apply the principles to myself – my zone 00 – I consider my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Let's use the example of my water intake to look at some of the permaculture principles.

The first permaculture principle: *observe & interact*, reminds me of the Al-Anon slogan “Awareness, Acceptance, Action.” When I became aware of the need to drink so much water, I first had to accept that it made sense to me and become aware of how much water I was drinking, without any rationalization. I also became aware and celebrated that I wasn't drinking soda, coffee and other dehydrating beverages. I then began to work toward my goal. In fact, I'm still working at being consistent about how much I drink...and I include herbal teas in my quantity. Observe and interact are now at a new level. I know how I feel in my body when I'm hydrated. I know that if I'm not getting enough water, my calves feel tight; I may feel tired and fuzzy brained or overly emotional; I may be constipated; and if I'm really off, my scalp can hurt, like it's trying to adhere to my skull. These are my personal observations, yours may be a little different.

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128. John Ericson, “75% of Americans May Suffer From Chronic Dehydration, According to Doctors.” *Medical Daily*, (July 3, 2013), accessed July 16, 2014. <http://www.medicaldaily.com/75-americans-may-suffer-chronic-dehydration-according-doctors-247393>.

I've confirmed these by repeatedly recognizing that when I get myself hydrated the symptoms subside. As I've become aware of, and accepted, my dehydration symptoms, I have become more adept at catching myself early. Another observation is that when I get busy or overfocused (like writing this), I can forget to drink. My response has been two-fold. First I try to get a couple cups of warm water and herb tea into me before I get into my day. Second, I will often set my random mindfulness chime that rings every hour or less, or a timer.

Principle two: *catch and store energy*, is what I'm doing by getting a head start on my water intake in the morning. Principle 3: *Obtain a yield*, can be seen as the good day I contribute to by drinking enough water; it isn't a guarantee of a good day, but it is much more likely.

Principle 4: *apply self-regulation and accept feedback* is the ongoing process of regulating my water intake and in accepting feedback from my body as to whether I'm drinking enough. It also applies to reminders I get from my friends when we're working or playing together and they ask if I'm drinking enough...and it was probably feedback from one of my early holistic practitioners. that got me aware of my dehydration in the first place.

Principle 5: *use and value renewable resources and services*, certainly applies to water. Principle 6: *produce no waste* is accomplished by sewage treatment if I'm in the city, or by my leach field or compost toilet when I'm in a rural location. I also avoid flushing everytime I urinate when I'm at home, or with like minded friends, so that I won't use water unnecessarily.

Principle 7: *design from pattern to details* can be seen in how I looked at the pattern of my days and realized that getting started with several cups of water and herb tea in the morning was a good place to begin adding in water. I also saw the pattern that I would often avoid drinking when I was in the city because I don't like chlorinated water and I do better drinking warm water than cold...seeing this pattern I could add in the detail of carrying a water bottle and often a thermos of hot water as well.

Principle 8: *integrate rather than segregate* is applied by recognizing that my body does much better when I integrate my water intake into my day...drinking small amounts frequently. Principle 9: *use small and slow solutions* applies both to my drinking small amounts throughout the day, and to the fact that I didn't immediately achieve, or expect to achieve good hydration...my body had to get better at absorbing more water and used to being hydrated.

Principle 10: *use and value diversity* came into play as I realized there was a number of ways I could get my fluids: water or water with lemon, herb tea, fruits and vegetables, juices, soups, even drinking the water from cooking my vegetables and soaking my dried fruits and nuts. Principle 11: *use edges and value the marginal* was a bit of a stretch...when I started increasing my water intake, it wasn't common to see people with water bottles everywhere; and I still often get funny looks when I ask for hot water with lemon, or water without ice at a restaurant. I had to work my edge of discomfort at being outside the norm; I had to decide my well-being was worth it. I've even learned to use it as an opportunity for conversation and education when it feels appropriate.

Principle 12: *creatively use and respond to change* is a pretty much daily process. Since I started transitioning toward menopause, I'm drinking several cups a day of herbal tea just to balance my hormones. I also find that my need for water is constantly in flux, depending on my activity, the room and outside temperature, my eating choices, etc.

As you can see, all of the principles work together and may even overlap. By looking at any situation, challenge, or design opportunity through the lenses of all twelve principles, we can be pretty sure that we are not missing anything. While this was a fairly simple example, this basic practice can be applied to any situation, no matter how complex. Sometimes the observation phase will bring out several interdependent systems at work.

There are many tools and techniques which can be applied to each principle, and learned as one gets more involved with permaculture. In the meantime, we can work with what we know. By using small and slow solutions and constantly observing and interacting, there is very little to be lost by getting started. Too many of us have been taught to listen to the experts and to not do anything until we can do it right. Meanwhile we are frozen, stuck in old patterns that we can see don't work. Permaculture helps us to shift from “I don't know...” to “I wonder...”

One of the blessings of permaculture is an attitude of gratitude and sharing. There are many free resources online, as well as active local networks, and low or no cost events. People will often share knowledge for a few hours work on a project, and swap plants or materials.

### 5.2.3. Indigenous Cultures – Native American Studies

We in Maine are blessed with a rich heritage of Native culture. For those who seek a way of thinking and being that might help to heal and strengthen themselves, our community and our world, Native American traditions provide a pathway to understanding and right relationship: with ourselves, our planet, and All Our Relations.<sup>129</sup>

Native American Studies is one arena in which students can begin to learn about the culture, values, traditions, and challenges of America's indigenous peoples. Many colleges and universities, however, do not have a stand alone Native American Studies (NAS) program. Sometimes they are contained within anthropology departments, and where they do exist they often seem to be marginalized. At the University of Maine, for example, there are currently no Masters or Baccalaureate degrees offered, only a minor. Further, all of the instructors, including the chair, are assigned to two or more programs.

For those who seek additional, or a less formal, entry into understanding Native American cultures, there are numerous reputable books available as well as gatherings (often called powwows) throughout the state which are open to the public. There are also cultural programs and speakers brought to many college campuses throughout the year.

There is vast wellspring of information and wisdom available to us, if only we are willing to humbly ask.<sup>130</sup> It is also important to understand that etiquette plays an

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129. "All Our Relations", or "All My Relations," may have different meanings among different tribes or circumstances. In this document, I use it according to the various teachings (predominantly Bear Tribe) I have received, and which resonate deeply with me, as a statement of my relatedness to all of creation.

130. Part of that humility must be recognition of the generations of genocide perpetrated against the original inhabitants of this, and every, continent and of the prevailing attitudes which continue to marginalize and denigrate both the individuals and cultures which may be our closest link to a culture of wholeness.



important role in Native culture, and that traditions vary among tribes and gatherings, as they do among all peoples.<sup>131</sup>

In my experience, most Native American traditions are deeply rooted in understanding humans as part of Nature – bound by the cycles of all of creation as well as those inherent to human beings and individuals. There is recognition of a deep connection and interdependence with all of creation – seen and unseen – and of the responsibility to maintain right relationship with all that currently exists and with the generations to come.

The medicine wheel<sup>132</sup> is a graphical depiction of this understanding used by many Native American peoples – though not the Wabanaki people of Maine. I find it to be a useful teaching tool, so I offer the representation below, based on my understanding of Sun Bear's<sup>133</sup> teachings as they have been passed to me.

The medicine wheel shown in Figure 5.3 is necessarily incomplete. Everything in existence has its place on the wheel, though its position may vary from tribe to tribe.

Humans in general are included with the other animals in the west. Each of us as

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131. I have found that listening and observing a great deal, participating when invited, and asking respectful questions from the heart when the opportunity arises are good practices to start with.

132. “Medicine wheel” is a term with multiple meanings. In addition to the graphical representation shown here, it may refer to stones placed on the earth in a pattern representing our interconnectedness, or the ceremony which uses such stones and pattern for teaching and celebration. It may also refer to the underlying teachings: e.g., which elements and attributes are associated with which direction.

133. Sun Bear, born Vincent La Duke (August 31, 1929 - June 19, 1992), was an activist, actor, teacher, lecturer, author, etc. of Ojibway (Chippewa), French, German and Norwegian heritage. Based on his sacred dreams and visions and the teaching he received from many sources, he taught and led ceremony for people of all races and nations. His ongoing intention was to offer a medicine that will bring balance between the races on the Earth Mother...medicine of today, as well as of tradition; not tied to single tradition but incorporating all he learned into medicine that was truly all-embracing. See: Sun Bear, Wabun Wind, and Edward B. Weinstock. *Sun Bear, the Path of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

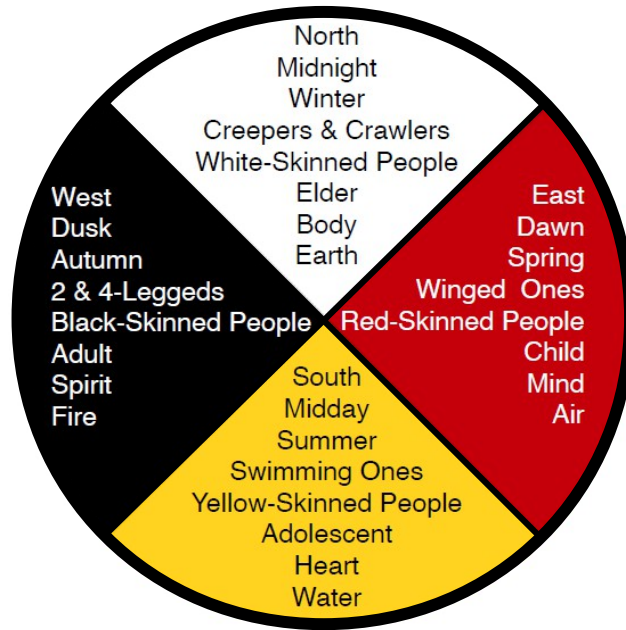


Figure 5.3. Bear Tribe Medicine Wheel

individuals resides in the center – accessing all that we need as we move through various phases of our lives or any given day.

The medicine wheel is perhaps the simplest depiction of a way of being which is both ancient and dramatically necessary to our well-being and, I believe, to our very survival. Native wisdom, as I understand it, revolves around the concept of *right relationship* mentioned above. To me, right relationship begins with one's self: with recognizing that we are perfectly unique and intimately related with all of existence. When we are in right relationship with ourselves, we commit to taking pristine care of ourselves – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Yet to do this, we must also take pristine care of All Our Relations, including the earth itself. This is a fine balance...one of taking what we need in a manner which attends to that which is taken, the broader community and future generations.

#### **5.2.4. Peace Studies**

Like Native American Studies, Peace Studies programs are not available at every college and university, and they often seem to be marginalized. Also like NAS, instructors are teaching in the program because they have a deep personal commitment to the principles and topics presented within Peace Studies classes. At the University of Maine, instructors are assigned to multiple programs and/or they are adjunct (part-time) instructors. UMaine does not offer a Masters or Baccalaureate degree in Peace Studies, however, it does offer a Peace Studies specialization to its Interdisciplinary Masters degree, as well as a Peace Studies Interdisciplinary Curriculum Minor, and a certificate program. Most of the classes are offered online.

The classes offered in Peace Studies offer vital understanding and skills to both those who seek individual enrichment and to those who seek to be positive agents of change in their community or the world, especially when the student consciously approaches them holistically, seeking more than an academic understanding. The pedagogy often includes experiential, contemplative and introspective aspects similar to those key to the course I propose and most likely to engage students in transformative learning.

## CHAPTER 6

### PROPOSED COURSE

*“...I was made acutely aware how far superior an education that stresses independent action and personal responsibility is to one that relies on drill, external authority and ambition.”<sup>134</sup> – Albert Einstein*

The idea for this class arose from my observation and belief that many, if not most, traditional<sup>135</sup> college graduates are not whole enough in themselves to be part of holistic solutions to the challenges that face our world. This was certainly true for me and my classmates in the 1980s, and it appears to be even more so today.

By designing this class for college age students, I seek to leverage the time in a young adult's life when they are beginning to make their own decisions, exploring who they are and how they want to live during, what is for most, their first time away from their parents' daily guidance and control. An additional likely benefit is to reduce the quantity and severity of stress related impacts to students.

This class is designed to help students gain self-awareness and develop specific skills toward holistic well-being. It could be offered under titles such as *Sustainable Life Choices, Happiness and Positive Change*, or even *Owner's Manual 101*, since the intention is to help students learn how they can develop and maintain their well-being and live a joyful and successful, as well as sustainable, life.

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134. “Einstein on Fairy Tales and Education | Brain Pickings,” accessed August 12, 2014, <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2014/03/14/einstein-fairy-tales/>.

135. “Traditional” refers to students in their late teens and early twenties who attend college immediately after high school. While there are many adult and part-time learners, they often return to school after gaining some of the wisdom and perspective this course intends to encourage. At the same time, I know very few people of any age who would not benefit from engaging in this course, given that so few of us have an accurate or holistic understanding of how to achieve wellbeing.

Because it is intended to prepare students to become active parts of the solution to our sustainability challenges – both at the university and beyond – this class is intended as a core class for all first year students. Ideally it will be followed with numerous other well-being and sustainability related classes. Since implementation of new curricula, and sustainability, tend to be very gradual, it is also flexible enough to stand on its own.

### **6.1. Pedagogy and Methodology**

Since the basis of this course is self-empowerment and development of a supportive community, the pedagogy will be primarily experiential and introspective. Throughout the course we will explore a variety of exercises known to increase our awareness and/or experience of physical, emotional, mental, and/or spiritual well-being. After experiencing the exercises, we will share our experiences and reactions to them.

Another key element to develop students' sense of empowerment and self-determination, as well as community, will be participation in the details of the class. Each module is designed to have some flexibility in when and how it is delivered.

The course is designed to be delivered in one or two sessions per week. For pedagogical reasons, classes should be limited to 20 students. If there are co-teachers, and an additional room is available for breakout, it might be possible to have larger classes, so long as there is at least one instructor for every 20 students.

#### **6.1.1. Academic Content**

The primary text for this class will be *People and Permaculture*.<sup>136</sup> This text explores personal and societal well-being from a permaculture perspective, including readings, activities, and case studies.

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136. Looby Macnamara, *People & Permaculture: Caring and Designing for Ourselves, Each Other and the Planet* (East Meon, Hampshire, England: Permanent Publications, 2012).

The film *Happy*<sup>137</sup> and its Higher Education Instructor's Guide may be used as an introduction to positive psychology. It provides a good opportunity to expand the campus well-being community by offering a campus wide showing of the movie with a follow-up discussion for those interested afterward, and/or in class when it meets next.

Other readings and videos will be included in the Well-Being Toolkit made available electronically to students, or placed on electronic reserve. These may change each time the course is taught as appropriate teaching materials and documentation of applicable research and applications continue to be made available.

### **6.1.2. Talking Circles**

Talking circles, also known as peacemaking circles, are designed to enable every voice to be heard equally and to facilitate both speaking and listening from the heart. The basic structure is to have participants and facilitators stand or sit in a circle. The facilitator will identify the topic and structure of sharing and pass a talking stick, feather, or other object. Only the person with the talking object speaks. Others are expected to listen from their heart. It is common for people to take a moment to collect their thoughts before they speak, since they were listening to the previous speaker until just before they received the talking object.

Ideally, the speaker doesn't respond to any individual speaker; instead they integrate all they have heard and respond from their heart. This is a much different form of listening than is common in our dominant culture where we are often focused on our response before the other person is even done speaking.

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137. *Happy*, directed by Roko Belic, (Wadi Rum Films, 2010), accessed April 4, 2014, Amazon Instant Video.

Respect is a key focus of talking circles. People who do not wish to speak may choose to hold the object in silence, or simply pass the talking object. Everyone shares and is listened to respectfully. We focus on sharing our own experiences and practicing non-judgmental speaking and listening. We also commit to maintain confidentiality of all that occurs in circle.

There are two basic structures of talking circle which will be made use of for this class. The first is for brief feelings check-ins at the beginning, or occasionally at the end of a class. The second would be for longer storytelling or sharing. Because they can be so effective at building community, personal awareness, and skills, most sessions will contain one or both forms of talking circle.

### **6.1.3. Check-in Logs**

Check-in logs can be key in increasing our awareness of how our choices impact our well-being – physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Logs will be used at various times throughout the course to raise our awareness. Usually they will only be required for a short period of time on a given topic, perhaps a week...enough so students can decide whether they have value for them.

One example of a check-in log is a food log. We log everything that we eat and how we feel while we are eating, 15-30 minutes later, an hour later, 2 hours later, 4 hours later and/or just before we eat again. We begin to notice which foods or combinations work for us and which cause indigestion, sluggishness, jitters, anxiety, foggy thinking, etc.; or perhaps we notice that if we eat when we're upset or rushed, we don't feel well. The idea isn't to change our behavior, simply to notice. Once we notice patterns, we may choose to adjust the details.

#### **6.1.4. Journal Writing**

Journal writing, in or out of class, will be a regular element. It may be used to record and reflect upon where we are at a given point in time – physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually; or where we would like to be. It may also be used to record students participation in a particular exercise, and their reflections about it.

#### **6.1.5. Storytelling**

Humans have learned and connected through stories for most of our existence as a species. When we share stories we connect emotionally, which helps us remember concepts better than rote memorization.<sup>138</sup> Storytelling will be integrated into the sharing of concepts and students will also be encouraged to share their experiences as stories, which will help them connect emotionally with their own and each other's experiences. We will also explore how the stories we create about ourselves and others influence our perceptions of situations and possibilities.

#### **6.1.6. Useful Tools and Food for Thought**

Virtually every class will introduce students to at least one tool, practice, or perspective which the instructor has found personally beneficial and/or is documented as effective in developing well-being. By the end of the semester, students will have a collection of tools and perspectives which they can draw on as they feel called. Some may resonate immediately and fit right into their day to day life, some may not...but they will be there if and when the student is ready for them.

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138. Craig Eilert Abrahamson, "Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in Higher Education." *Education* 118, no. 3 (Spring98 1998): 440-451, accessed July 25, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.



## **6.2. Course Formats**

This class is easily adjustable for students who invest one credit hour of their time and effort, all the way through to those who want the full three credits. The class is structured such that students taking one, two, or three credits can easily be accommodated in the same class.

I would also recommend that students be allowed to retake the class for a higher number of credits. Some students may take the class for one credit, yet see the benefit their classmates get from additional participation and want to retake it for two or three credits. While this will mean repeating their previous work, my experience is that this will help them to integrate their new understanding and awareness at deeper levels. Having students retake the class may also help us to strengthen our support community.

### **6.2.1. One Credit Class**

The one credit class will consist of full participation in all class sessions and preparatory work of 30-45 minutes. In the event that a student misses a class session, they will have the opportunity to make it up through a check-in log, journal writing, or other work mutually agreeable to both instructor and student. The one credit class will focus on imparting knowledge regarding well-being and engaging students in increasing their awareness.

### **6.2.2. Two Credit Class**

The two credit class option will add the completion of check-in logs and/or other work averaging 30 minutes per day to the work of the one credit option. This option will focus on imparting knowledge regarding well-being and engaging students in increasing

their awareness level to the point where they are beginning to consciously consider their well-being in their decision-making.

### **6.2.3. Three Credit Class**

The three credit class option will add well-being exercises, journal writing, and/or other work requiring an additional 30 minutes per day to the work of the 2 credit option. This option will focus on imparting knowledge regarding well-being and engaging students in increasing their awareness level, consciously considering their well-being in their decision-making, and gaining an experiential understanding of well-being exercises and their impact.

### **6.3. Additional Faculty Participation**

There is a great deal to be gained by participation of other faculty, either as guest teachers, co-teachers, or as fellow students. It is important for faculty to understand that we are endeavoring to create a culture of well-being and sustainability, in part by minimizing hierarchy and maximizing participation and empowerment of all present. Faculty members and students will respect and treat each other as equals who may serve different roles in different situations, as appropriate.

### **6.4. Student Assessments**

All students will be assessed based on their participation during class, completeness of assignments and level of effort evident in their introspection and analysis. There will also be brief exams assessing students knowledge of key concepts.

#### **6.4.1. One Credit Assessment**

Students enrolled in the one credit option will be graded as follows:

- Participation – 80%
- Exams – 20%
- make up assignments for missed classes will replace a proportionate percentage of the participation grade, approximately 5% of the course grade per class.

#### **6.4.2. Two Credit Assessment**

Students enrolled in the two credit option will be graded as follows:

- Participation – 60%
- Exams – 20%
- Assignments - 20%
- make up assignments for missed classes will replace a proportionate percentage of the participation grade, approximately 4% of the course grade per class.

#### **6.4.3. Three Credit Assessment**

Students enrolled in the three credit option will be graded as follows:

- Participation – 40%
- Exams – 20%
- Assignments - 40%
- make up assignments for missed classes will replace a proportionate percentage of the participation grade, approximately 3% of the course grade per class.

#### **6.5. Course Assessments**

In addition to the university course assessments completed by students at the end of the semester, it is suggested that a brief questionnaire relating to well-being and sustainability be administered to students at registration (or the beginning of the course)

and before they receive their grade (or the end of the course). Ideally this will be administered electronically to facilitate analysis and confidentiality.

## **6.6. Course Presentation**

See Appendix C for a detailed course outline, and Appendix E for a “toolkit” of information and exercises which help raise awareness or increase well-being (Appendix D provides a list of these items). The course outline is based on two seventy-five minute sessions or a two-and-a half hour session per week across 14 weeks of class time. While the order of presentation may vary somewhat, the topics covered include:

- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: Frameworks and Philosophies
- Week 3: Mental Well-being, Part I
- Week 4: Emotional Well-being, Part I
- Week 5: Spiritual Well-being, Part I
- Week 6: Physical Well-being, Part I
- Week 7: Mid-Semester Questions and Reflection
- Week 8: Mental Well-being, Part II
- Week 9: Emotional Well-being, Part II
- Week 10: Spiritual Well-being, Part II
- Week 11: Physical Well-being, Part II
- Week 12: Sustainability at UMaine
- Week 13: Your Role in Creating a Sustainable World
- Week 14: Reflection

## CHAPTER 7

### NON-CREDIT APPLICATION

One of the benefits of the non-credit applications of this material is that it is easily customized to nearly any audience or format. They could easily be adapted for use within residence halls, student organizations, student wellness, campus counseling centers, and inclusion within other classes. Since the proposed course may initially be offered as an elective, opening the conversation will expand interest in the full course, as well as play a vital role in itself.

These applications are equally appropriate for faculty and staff, either in conjunction with students or through employee wellness, department meetings, workshops, etc. Every effort should be made to engage faculty and staff in well-being activities and conversations, both for their own benefit and because little real change will occur on campus without their full participation.

#### **7.1. Presentations**

See Appendix F (on the accompanying CD/DVD) for two experiential slide presentations I have developed. These presentations are introductory in nature and provide an opportunity to develop and gauge interest for further activities. Audience questions and participation dramatically increase the meaningfulness of the presentations as we address questions and concerns relating real life circumstances.

*Happiness and Positive Change* is approximately an hour long, depending on the participation of the audience. Earlier versions of this presentation have been offered at the University of Maine through the Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies and the

Wilson Center. A video of this presentation, without an audience, is included in Appendix F.

*Self-Care: A Prerequisite to Sustainability*, is 3-4 hours long, depending on audience participation. This presentation is an expansion of *Happiness and Positive Change* to include a permaculture perspective and more experiential activities. The initial version was presented at the 2014 Northeast Permaculture Convergence. This presentation is directed to those interested or engaged in sustainability activities and/or permaculture.

## **7.2. Talking Circles or Salons**

Talking circles, or less formal salon discussions, provide a wonderful opportunity to open the conversation about well-being, and/or sustainability, and to continue it. They are wonderful accompaniment to pot-luck dinners or as follow-up to one of the aforementioned presentations.

## **7.3. Event Series**

An ongoing series of presentations, salons, and/or talking circles can be an effective way to build a community of well-being. They could provide a great lunchtime pick-me-up, or a non-alcoholic, and truly happy, “happy hour.”

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION**

Happiness and well-being may provide the necessary motivation and energy for the shift to a sustainable world, which even the United Nations has accepted as necessary. The field of positive psychology, which has arisen in the last few decades, provides ample scientific information as to the nature of well-being and how it may be achieved. We now know that well-being not only increases our ability to think creatively and collaboratively, it also helps us to make better long-term decisions for ourselves and our communities.

While both sustainability and well-being curricula have been developed for all age levels, implementation is far from widespread in the U.S. Because so much of the current status of planetary well-being and sustainability efforts can generate fear, shame, and overwhelm in students – emotions which are likely to create tremendous stress and impair students ability to respond productively to the challenges at hand – developing a students well-being and can be an important early step toward sustainability.

The curriculum proposed within this project, along with the non-credit applications, is designed to provide students the knowledge necessary to develop and maintain life-long well-being and empower them to define and achieve success that is both meaningful and sustainable for them, and for our world. By extending the teaching of well-being to the entire campus community, we begin creating a culture of well-being, adept in the attitudes and behaviors necessary to function as positive agents of change for our community and our world.

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## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING

The following books, in addition to many I have included in the bibliography, have proven instrumental in my growth toward well-being and/or have come to be books I recommend to others to support their own growth.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. *Discovering Choices: Our Recovery in Relationships*. Virginia Beach, VA: Al-Anon Family Groups, 2008.

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# Al-Anon guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon and Alateen Members.

## A Meeting on Wheels

G-22

A meeting on wheels is an opportunity for Al-Anon and Alateen members to demonstrate what a meeting is like to potential members, students, professionals, and others interested in learning about the help and hope available in our fellowship. It is usually conducted by three to five members, depending on the time available. One is selected to introduce our program. This member or another can serve as the Chairperson to lead the meeting. The program should allow each of the members to participate equally on a given topic (see meeting format below). This usually takes about 15-20 minutes. This is followed by a question-and-answer period that can be conducted by the chairperson or another member. The outreach DVD, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31 DVD), may be shown as part of the program.

### Tips

- Remember—you don't have to be perfect.
- Keep in mind that the purpose is to introduce our program and to demonstrate what our meetings are like to the audience.
- Read guideline for *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1).
- Share briefly and speak plainly.
- Keep the focus on your own recovery.
- Display the *Table Anonymity Card* (S-9), literature, and Al-Anon/Alateen books, when possible.
- Provide appropriate Al-Anon/Alateen literature, for example:
  - *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine
  - *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4)
  - *Outreach Bookmark* (M-76)
  - *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48)
- Hand out meeting lists with local/Area and WSO contact information (e.g., phone numbers, e-mail and Web site addresses).
- Distribute material for professionals in attendance, i.e., *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23), and the *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37ES/S-37EF).

### Do Not:

- Argue or challenge doctors, social workers, counselors, or any other person.
- Use Al-Anon sayings, e.g. "Take what you liked and leave the rest," when speaking.
- Offer opinions on alcoholism, its treatment, counseling, therapy, or the A.A. program.
- Give advice to individuals, students, or professionals.
- Speak for Al-Anon as a whole.

Keep the focus  
on your own  
recovery.

### Suggested Meeting Format

Leader: My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the leader of tonight's (today's) meeting. *Have other members introduce themselves by first name only in the spirit of anonymity, as they would at a meeting. Mention that Al-Anon is a spiritual rather than religious program, and that we are not professionals. Refer to the Al-Anon Is/Is Not bookmark (M-44) or the Fact Sheet for Professionals pamphlet (S-37ES/S-37EF) for a summary of important points about Al-Anon/Alateen.*

### Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome

We welcome you to the \_\_\_\_\_ Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live or have lived with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon/Alateen we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our program. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes, and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon/Alateen ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon/Alateen program is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous), which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives, along with our slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon/Alateen literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity. Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program. Everything that is said here, in the group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel

free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon/Alateen.

### Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions. Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

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## Al-Anon has but **one purpose:** to help families of alcoholics.

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### The Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, AA's Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of goodwill, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words!

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

### The Twelve Traditions

*The leader can explain the purpose of the Traditions and/or read the introduction, the Tradition corresponding to the month (i.e., February - Tradition Two) or the entire Twelve Traditions.* The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with AA and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations, and anonymity. The Traditions evolved from the experience of AA groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. Al-Anon adopted these group guidelines and over the years has found them sound and wise. Although they are only suggestions, Al-Anon's unity and perhaps even its survival are dependent on adherence to these principles.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

## Program

*Suggested topics for discussion include: the First Step, slogans, accepting alcoholism as a family disease, etc. Members share as if at a regular meeting.*

## Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: Whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them, too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realize that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you. After a while, you'll discover that though you may not like all of us, you'll love us in a very special way—the same way we already love you.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.

*Note: for demonstration purposes, it may be best not to close with a prayer. Some groups use the Al-Anon Declaration as an alternative closing.*

## What's In It for You?

Members tell us that as participants a meeting on wheels is often **three meetings in one:**  
**a meeting on the way to the meeting;**  
**the meeting itself;**  
**and the meeting you'll have on the return trip.**

A meeting on wheels can be a **service "high."**  
 It's a way to **carry the message** and have **fun** and **fulfillment** at the same time.



## The Twelve Concepts of Service

The Twelve Concepts of Service is one of Al-Anon's three Legacies, along with the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The Twelve Concepts of Service summarize the Al-Anon principles that have proven to help Al-Anon's service organizations function effectively together.

Al-Anon's books and pamphlets have a great deal to say about how Al-Anon members use the Three Legacies as a tool for spiritual growth. But the best way to come to understand the Legacies is to listen to members share at Al-Anon meetings.

### Twelve Concepts of Service

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members.
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

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### General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
3. that all decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible by unanimity;
4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;

5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

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Source: <http://al-anon.alateen.org/the-twelve-concepts?tmpl=component&print=1>, accessed July 18, 2014.

## APPENDIX C: DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE

This detailed course outline is based on a one, two, and three credit combined class taught in one extended session per week two and a half hours long with a fifteen minute break midway. This also approximates a two session per week format.

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Welcome & Class Intention
- 1.2. Tool Tip: Water and P.A.C.E.
  - 1.2.1. Water -Always bring a full bottle/travel mug of water to class. Our bodies are 60% water. 75% in our muscles; 85% in our brain. It is estimated that we need to drink at least 10 cups of water per day – half our weight in ounces. More if it is hot, we exercise strenuously, didn't drink enough previously, etc. Pinch test for dehydration.
  - 1.2.2. Brain Gym® P.A.C.E. - PACE helps us move into our learning pace, to be present. Great transition. Helpful to reduce stress anytime. Great for sports or any activity. See Appendix C.1. Positive. Active. Clear. Energetic. Move up the ladder of PACE. Energetic: Water. Clear: Brain Buttons bring oxygen to front, creative and collaborative, section of our brain. Active: Cross Crawls. Crossing centerline, builds pathways between the two hemispheres of our brains. Positive: Hook ups.
- 1.3. Format of class
  - 1.3.1. Academic, Experiential, Introspective & Participatory
  - 1.3.2. One, Two, or Three Credit Options
  - 1.3.3. Suggested Format and options – Decisions to Make as a Class
  - 1.3.4. Title of Class & Brief Definitions of Important Terms – Sustainable, Regenerative, Resilient, Happiness, Well-being, Holistic
- 1.4. Assignments
  - 1.4.1. 1, 2, and 3 Credits: Read Al-Anon and Permaculture documents in toolkit, and *People and Permaculture* pp 32-34 on observation and Biotime diaries.
  - 1.4.2. 2 and 3 credits: Hourly Water Intake and Well-Being Log
  - 1.4.3. 3 credits: 3 Blessings Daily Journal

- 1.5. In Class Assignment – Options for sharing in talking circle after break:
  - 1.5.1. 3 minute story (real or fictional) which represents who you are
  - 1.5.2. Intentions, Expectations and Commitment for Class.
- 1.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 1.7. Introduce Talking Circles and Develop Guidelines
- 1.8. Talking Circle

**WEEK 2: DECISION MAKING, FRAMEWORKS AND PHILOSOPHIES**

- 2.1. Check-In Talking Circle – Feelings, Awareness, Opportunity
- 2.2. Human Decision Making
- 2.3. Personal Experience
- 2.4. Al-Anon
- 2.5. Indigenous Cultures - Native American Studies
- 2.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 2.7. Peace Studies
- 2.8. Permaculture
- 2.9. Others Applicable to Every Area of Life? Buddhist, Ayurveda,...
- 2.10. Tool Tips
  - 2.10.1. Freedom and Response-Ability
  - 2.10.2. H.A.L.T – Are you hungry, angry, lonely, tired or otherwise stressed?
  - 2.10.3. Awareness, Acceptance, Action
- 2.11. Assignments
  - 2.11.1. 1, 2, and 3 credits: Read *People and Permaculture* – Chapter 5: “Health and Well-Being,” pp 69-71 & 77-80 and materials on personality types and learning styles
  - 2.11.2. 2 and 3 credits: Pause, PACE, and Well-being Log
  - 2.11.3. 3 credits: Morning Pages Journal

### **WEEK 3: MENTAL WELL-BEING, PART I**

- 3.1. Check-In Talking Circle – Feelings, Awareness, Opportunity
- 3.2. Tool Tip: Breathing
- 3.3. Personality Type
- 3.4. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 3.5. Intelligences/Learning Styles
- 3.6. Talking Circle – How has learning your personality type and learning style shifted your awareness of yourself and others?
- 3.7. Assignments:
  - 3.7.1. 1, 2, and 3 credits: Read *People & Permaculture* pp 74-76 and complete at least 3 well-being questionnaires from [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org) (Stress and Well-Being Survey) and/or [www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org) (UPenn Positive Psychology Center)
  - 3.7.2. 2 and 3 credits: Hourly Breathing and Well-Being Log
  - 3.7.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 3.7.3.1. Shifting Perspective - How has your awareness of your personality type and learning style shifted your perspective of how you approach classes and life. If you had completed the questionnaires previously, did the results shift at all?
    - 3.7.3.2. Three Blessings
    - 3.7.3.3. Morning Pages

### **WEEK 4: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, PART I**

- 4.1. Check-In Talking Circle
  - 4.1.1. Feelings
  - 4.1.2. How Happy are you right now? (1-10; miserable - blissful)
  - 4.1.3. Would you like to be happier? (1-10; absolutely - no way)
  - 4.1.4. How willing are you to change patterns of thinking and behavior that interfere with your happiness? (1-10; absolutely - no way)
- 4.2. Culturally Supported Assumptions that Interfere with Happiness

- 4.3. Alternative Perspectives
- 4.4. Happiness Myths and Perplexities
- 4.5. What is Happiness? – In Depth
  - 4.5.1. How Much Can We Control?
  - 4.5.2. Flourishing – P.E.R.M.A
  - 4.5.3. Sustainable Happiness
- 4.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 4.7. How Can We Get Happier?
  - 4.7.1. Proven Practices
  - 4.7.2. The 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People
- 4.8. Assignments
  - 4.8.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Read *People and Permaculture* pp 81-82 and excerpt from *Abundant Community*(Chapter 4, “The Abundant Community,” pp 65-82)
  - 4.8.2. 2 and 3 credits: Three Blessings Journal
  - 4.8.3. 3 credits: Additional Journal Writing Options
    - 4.8.3.1. Reflection- What did you learn from completion of several well-being questionnaires? Is there anything useful you can apply immediately? If you had completed similar questionnaires previously, did the results shift at all?
    - 4.8.3.2. Morning Pages
    - 4.8.3.3. Explore other proven happiness practices

## **WEEK 5: SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, PART I**

- 5.1. Tool Tips:
  - 5.1.1. *Meditation is Easy* video, guided meditation with Susanne Walker
  - 5.1.2. Be Here Now
- 5.2. What is Religion and/or Spirituality?
- 5.3. Your Place in the Universe

- 5.4. Prayer and Meditation
  - 5.4.1. What is it and how do we do it?
  - 5.4.2. Leaving “God” room to work:
    - 5.4.2.1. This or something better.
    - 5.4.2.2. The highest and best for all
- 5.5. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 5.6. Interdependence Map
- 5.7. *Abundant Community*
- 5.8. Feelings Check-in Talking Circle
- 5.9. Assignment:
  - 5.9.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Read *People and Permaculture* pp 71-74 and the *Eat Right 4 Your Type* section for your blood type; complete Ayurvedic Constitution Questionnaire
  - 5.9.2. 2 and 3 credits: Try at least 3 different well-being practices and briefly log your responses
  - 5.9.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 5.9.3.1. Reflection – What role does community play in your life?
    - 5.9.3.2. Three Blessings
    - 5.9.3.3. Morning Pages
    - 5.9.3.4. Explore other proven happiness practices and detail your experience

**WEEK 6: PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, PART I**

- 6.1. Balance Check-In and Rooting
- 6.2. Where's My Owner's Manual???
- 6.3. Garbage In, Garbage Out
- 6.4. Observe Your Bodies Messages – look, smell, taste, texture, pain

- 6.5. Tool Tips:
  - 6.5.1. Finger Kinesiology
  - 6.5.2. Biorythms and free biorythm applications
  - 6.5.3. Chew your beverages and drink your food
- 6.6. Balance
- 6.7. Rest
- 6.8. *Eat Right for Your Type*
- 6.9. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 6.10. Ayurvedic Constitutions as guides for eating and lifestyle
- 6.11. Talking Circle – How comfortable are you with your body and its function?
- 6.12. Assignments:
  - 6.12.1. 1, 2, and 3 credits: Midterm assessment of grasp of important concepts
  - 6.12.2. 2 and 3 credits: Input-Output Log
  - 6.12.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 6.12.3.1. Reflection – If you're not comfortable with your body and its functions, why do you think this is so? How might you become more comfortable with listening to the information your body is providing? What might you learn from more focused observation of your bodies functioning?
    - 6.12.3.2. Explore some of the proven happiness practices and detail your experience

**WEEK 7: MID-SEMESTER QUESTIONS AND REFLECTION**

- 7.1. Talking Circle
  - 7.1.1. Feelings Check-in
  - 7.1.2. How is your experience of class, what are you noticing in yourself?
  - 7.1.3. What about class is working?
  - 7.1.4. What about class isn't working?
- 7.2. Laughter Yoga Video and Exercise



- 7.3. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 7.4. Problem Solving and Questions regarding any of the practices we've discussed
- 7.5. Course Recalibration - Do we need to change any of our format decisions?
- 7.6. Assignments
  - 7.6.1. 1, 2, and 3 Credit: Read *People and Permaculture* Chapter 6 – “Being at Our Best,” pp 83-100; review Feelings and Needs Document from toolkit.
  - 7.6.2. 2 and 3 Credit: Perform the exercises in *P&P* Chapter 6
  - 7.6.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 7.6.3.1. Reflection – Are you getting as much as you'd like out of class? What might you do to get more out of it?
    - 7.6.3.2. Three Blessings
    - 7.6.3.3. Morning Pages
    - 7.6.3.4. Explore some of the proven happiness practices and detail your experience

**WEEK 8: MENTAL WELL-BEING, PART II**

- 8.1. Talking Circle
  - 8.1.1. Feelings Check-in
  - 8.1.2. How comfortable do you feel when conflict arises?
  - 8.1.3. How effective do you feel when conflict arises?
- 8.2. Tool Tips:
  - 8.2.1. 80-20 Rule
  - 8.2.2. Shifting from Judgment to Discernment
  - 8.2.3. Shifting from Can't/Should to I wonder...
  - 8.2.4. Every moment is a choice...
- 8.3. Conflict Resolution Styles
- 8.4. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 8.5. Dignity

8.6. Non-Violent Communication

8.7. Assignments

8.7.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Read *Anatomy of Peace Extract* and *People and Permaculture* Chapter 7 – Communication, pp 107-128.

8.7.2. 2 and 3 credits: Feelings, Needs, and Strategies Log

8.7.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options

8.7.3.1. What role has conflict played in your life? Using an the example of a recent situation and how you did (or didn't) respond to it – both internally and externally, how might you have responded differently in light of this week's exploration?

8.7.3.2. How effective do you feel you are at differentiating between what you are thinking and feeling in various situations? Use specific examples.

8.7.3.3. What stories do you find repeating themselves in your life? How might you change that story?

## **WEEK 9: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, PART II**

9.1. Check-In

9.2. Tools:

9.2.1. Well-Being Buddy

9.2.2. Evolutionary Partner

9.2.3. Co-Creating Partnership

9.3. The Importance of Language

9.4. Changing the Stories We Live By

9.5. Anatomy of Peace

9.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes

- 9.7. Talking Circle: What stories were passed down to you? What stories have you created for yourself? Do they serve you well? How might you reframe them to serve you better?
- 9.8. Assignments
- 9.8.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Read excerpt from *Returning to the Teachings* – Chapter 5, Watch Your Language, pp 104-135
- 9.8.2. 2 and 3 credits: Language Log
- 9.8.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
- 9.8.3.1. Do you tend to think in black and white...pigeon whole or stereotype people and situations...or are do you see the uniqueness of each person and situation? Do you feel you tend to *judge* or *discern*? What's the difference, use specific examples
- 9.8.3.2. Explore your use of language. Do you find yourself using judgmental language which indicates the value of something to you as you are speaking, writing, or thinking? How does your relationship to the person, thing, or situation feel different when you shift away from judgmental words.
- 9.8.3.3. Three Blessings

## **WEEK 10: SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, PART II**

- 10.1. Check-In
- 10.2. Tools:
- 10.2.1. The God of *Your* Understanding
- 10.2.2. Be BOLD – Brave, Open, Loving, and Disciplined
- 10.2.3. Is it mine to do? Is it mine to do NOW?
- 10.3. Ethics and Values; Patterns of Belief
- 10.3.1. Ethic of Justice
- 10.3.2. Ethic of Care
- 10.3.3. Reverence for Life
- 10.3.4. Right Relationship
- 10.4. Moving from Polarized to Spectrum Thinking

- 10.5. Are you willing to “be faithless and therefore trustworthy?” (Oria Mountain Dreamer, *The Invitation*, [www.oriamountaindreamer.com](http://www.oriamountaindreamer.com))
- 10.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 10.7. Talking Circle – What has it felt like when you experienced ethic of justice? Ethic of care? Which are you most comfortable with? Do you have a God of your understanding? Which ethic do you experience them as?
- 10.8. Assignments
  - 10.8.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Read excerpts on proper food combining and acid-alkaline balance
  - 10.8.2. 2 and 3 credits: Food log, specifically noting your combinations and acid-alkaline choices.
  - 10.8.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 10.8.3.1. How are you BOLD, and/or how would you like to be?
    - 10.8.3.2. Read *The Invitation* and journal your response to it.
    - 10.8.3.3. Three blessings

## **WEEK 11: PHYSICAL WELL-BEING, PART II**

- 11.1. Check-In
- 11.2. Tools:
  - 11.2.1. Choice Making (Brain Gym)
  - 11.2.2. pH strips
  - 11.2.3. Neurolymphatic Massage Points
- 11.3. Proper Food Combining
- 11.4. Acid-Alkaline Balance
- 11.5. Maintenance & Detoxification
- 11.6. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes

- 11.7. Talking Circle – Food choices, what have you noticed, how do you feel? Does any particular dietary program seem to work well for you? Or not?
- 11.8. Assignments
  - 11.8.1. 1, 2 and 3 credits: Review the campus website for details on sustainability activities and plans. Review resources available at <http://www.aashe.org/>
  - 11.8.2. 2 and 3 credits: Meditate for 10-30 minutes and Log your experiences
  - 11.8.3. 3 credits: Journal Writing Options
    - 11.8.3.1. Are you involved in any campus sustainability activities? In your review of the campus website, did you find any surprises? Anything you'd like to get involved with?
    - 11.8.3.2. Explore your use of language. Do you find yourself using judgmental language which indicates the value of something to you as you are speaking, writing, or thinking? How does your relationship to the person, thing, or situation feel different when you shift away from judgmental words.
    - 11.8.3.3. What stories do you find repeating themselves in your life? How might you change that story?

## **WEEK 12: CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY**

- 12.1. Presented by Campus Sustainability Coordinator, if possible
- 12.2. Accomplishments & History
- 12.3. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 12.4. Current Initiatives
- 12.5. How to Get Involved

## **WEEK 13: SPECIAL TOPICS**

- 13.1. Check-in Talking Circle – Feelings; Most beneficial exercise you've done
- 13.2. Right Livelihood
- 13.3. Intentional Community

- 13.4. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 13.5. Requested Topics
  - 13.5.1. Voluntary Presentations by Students
  - 13.5.2. Requested by Students
    - 13.5.2.1. Problem Solving and Questions regarding any of the practices we've discussed
    - 13.5.2.2. Greater Detail on Previous Topics
    - 13.5.2.3. Related Topics

#### **WEEK 14: REFLECTION**

- 14.1. Talking Circle
  - 14.1.1. Feelings Check-in
  - 14.1.2. How is your experience of class, what are you noticing in yourself?
  - 14.1.3. What about class worked?
  - 14.1.4. What about class didn't work?
- 14.2. Laughter Yoga Video and Exercise
- 14.3. Pause to Refresh - 15 Minutes
- 14.4. Talking Circle
  - 14.4.1. Your Vision of Success
  - 14.4.2. Your Role In Creating A Sustainable World
    - 14.4.2.1. At home
    - 14.4.2.2. In your Community
    - 14.4.2.3. Beyond

## APPENDIX D: WELL-BEING TOOLKIT INDEX

This toolkit will be provided to students on a CD/DVD or by download. It is also contained in the CD included with this document. The Toolkit will include the following:

1. 9 Choices of Extremely Happy People
2. Al-Anon Concepts and Warranties (pdf format)
3. Al-Anon Meeting on Wheels Brochure (pdf format)
4. Ayurvedic Constitution Questionnaire (pdf format)
5. Bear Tribe Medicine Wheel (pdf format)
6. Brain Gym® P.A.C.E. Exercise Poster (pdf format)
7. Feelings and Needs (pdf format)
8. *Laughter Yoga – Laughing Alone, Stage Actor Technique* - Madan Kataria (mp4 format)
9. *Meditation is Easy* by Susanne Walker (mp3 and mp4 format)
10. Permaculture, Essence of (pdf format)
11. Permaculture Ethics, Principles, and Proverbs (pdf format)
12. Permaculture Flower of Domains (pdf format)

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR**

Aurora Walks Gently was born in Bangor, Maine. Her youth on farms in Belchertown, MA and Thorndike, ME fostered in her a love of animals and of the land, as well as many practical skills and qualities – the most important being the sense that she can learn to do anything that needs to be done.

She graduated from Mount View High School, in Thorndike, Maine, after which she attended the University of Maine, in Orono, Maine. She graduated in 1987 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Computer Science and a commission into the Air Force Ready Reserve. Ms. Walks Gently left the career of computer science after achieving the position of Senior Systems Analyst at Bath Iron Works in 1994. Since that time, she has primarily served in administrative roles in non-profit and holistic health organizations, as well as facilitating healing work privately, in both Maine and Virginia.

Ms. Walks Gently has actively pursued her own holistic well-being, and encouraged others to do the same, since 1990. She is a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Maine in August, 2014.