



CHFV 10: Psychology of Happiness and Virtue
Tue & Thu 11:10am-12:30pm
HMNSS 1501

INSTRUCTOR

Sonja Lyubomirsky
Psychology 3111C; 951-827-5041
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OFFICE HOUR

Tuesdays, 12:30pm-1:30pm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class time in CHFV10 will consist of two 80-minute lectures (mixed in with discussions) per week, as well as weekly 50-min discussion sections and weekly 50-min workshops. You are expected to attend every lecture, section and workshop to receive credit for this course. During the section meetings, you will discuss positive psychological (PP) concepts and methods, participate in demonstrations, and practice and discuss PP exercises. During the workshops, your peer mentors will guide you through the transition to university life and link you to the resources necessary for your academic success. You are expected to be an active participant in lecture, section discussions, and workshops.

There will be two (2) *midterm exams* and a *final exam* in this course, consisting of multiple-choice questions and some short-answer questions. The two midterms will comprise 35% of your final course grade and the final will contribute 30% towards your final grade. You will be tested on material from the assigned reading assignments and from lectures. Please bring your own scantron sheets to each exam. Official documentation of a family or medical emergency is required to take a make-up exam (only one make-up time is available per exam).

In addition, because you will be receiving 4 units for this course (with an addition unit for attendance in workshop), you will be assigned a *heavy reading load*, as well as three (3) *take-home exercises* (involving short response papers; see below).

Most of the readings will be available as PDF files on the iLearn course website. The rest of the readings are from the instructor's books (*The How of Happiness* and *The Myths of Happiness*), which give a "layperson" version of many of the topics and readings covered. Both should be available at the UCR bookstore, or in any popular chain or online store (e.g., www.amazon.com). It is *absolutely critical* that you read carefully and reflectively each article and chapter assigned – usually 2 to 4 articles/chapters per week – though please note that often only particular pages (and not entire chapters) are required. The page numbers are the same for the hardcover and paperback editions of either book.

You will also be required to apply concepts and strategies learned in the course to your own personal lives and to write about your experiences. Accordingly, you will complete *four (4) take-home assignments*, due on Oct 9, Nov 1, Nov 8, and Nov 29. You will be called on to discuss these assignments during some of the class and section sessions. Grades for these four assignments will count 35% towards your final grade.

Finally, for extra credit, you are encouraged to collect newspaper articles, magazine articles, or cartoons that demonstrate principles or phenomena discussed in this course. Those of you who submit your collection in section during the week of Dec 3, with a 1/2 to 1 page description of the principles demonstrated, will receive up to an extra 3% of your Final Exam grade.

In summary, your final course grade will be composed of the following:

Exams		65%
Midterm 1 (Oct 25)	15%	
Midterm 2 (Nov 15)	20%	
Final Exam (Dec 12)	30%	
Take-Home Assignments		35%
Daily Mood Form (Oct 9)	5%	
Happiness Strategy Exercise (Nov 1)	10%	
VIA Questionnaire (Nov 8)	10%	
Strengths Exercise (Nov 29)	10%	

COURSE WEB PAGE AND FORUM

All relevant course materials (e.g., readings, hand-outs, copies of PowerPoint slides from lecture) will be posted on the CHFY10 web page. To access it, go to <http://ilearn.ucr.edu> and login by entering your username and password (see instructions on the page). You are encouraged to visit the web page frequently, as announcements will be posted there as well. In addition, this web page has a student forum to allow students to communicate with one another.

OFFICE HOURS (If you cannot make any of these times, please make an appointment.)

Instructor Sonja Lyubomirsky	Psychology 3111C; x25041 sonja.lyubomirsky@ucr.edu	Tue, 12:30pm-1:30pm
Teaching Assistant	Olmsted 2107	Wed, 1pm-2pm
Teaching Assistant	Olmsted 3xxx	Thu, 1:30pm-2:30pm

SECTIONS

<u>Section # (Call #)</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Location</u>
022 (12188)	Mon	11:10am-12pm		INTS 1125
021 (12187)	Mon	12:10pm-1pm		OLMH 1126
023 (12189)	Mon	1:10pm-2pm		INTS 1134
024 (12190)	Tue	1:10pm-2pm		INTS 2134
025 (12191)	Tue	2:10pm-3pm		WAT 1117
026 (12192)	Wed	2:10pm-3pm		INTS 1130

SYLLABUS

CLASS 1 – THU, September 27: Strengths Introductions

NO READINGS & NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

Assigned: Daily mood, behavior, and situation form.

CLASS 2 – TUE, October 2: Introduction to Positive Psychology

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Chapter 1 (“What is positive psychology?”; pp. 3-24).

CLASS 3 – THU, October 4: Happiness – What Is It and How Is It Measured?

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 2 (“How happy are you, and why?”; pp. 27-38 only).

Diener, E., Oishi, S. & Lucas, R. E. (2009). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and life satisfaction. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.; pp. 187-194). New York: Oxford University Press.

CLASS 4 – TUE, October 9: Why Are Some People Happier Than Others?

Myers, D. G. (2000). The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. *American Psychologist*, 55, 56-67.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 6 (“I can’t be happy when...I’m broke”; pp. 145-148 only); Chapter 1 (“I’ll be happy when...I’m married to the right person”; pp. 18-34 only); Chapter 5 (“I’ll be happy when...I find the right job”; pp. 131-135 only). (Optional: Download the References for this book, which are stored in a separate file.)

Due: Daily mood, behavior, and situation form assignment.

CLASS 5 – THU, October 11: Benefits of Happiness

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 1 (“Why be happy?”; pp. 24-26 only).

Jacobs Bao, K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2012). The rewards of happiness. In I. Boniwell & S. David (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of happiness* (pp. 119-133). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Danner, D. D., Snowdon, D. A., & Friesen, W. V. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the nun study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 804-813.

Harker, L., & Keltner, D. (2001). Expressions of positive emotions in women’s college yearbook pictures and their relationship to personality and life outcomes across adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 112-124.

Assigned: Happiness strategy exercise (Gratitude Letter or Forgiveness Letter or Best Possible Selves).

CLASS 6 – TUE, October 16: Is It Possible to Increase Happiness and If So, How?

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Foreword (pp. 1-9), Chapter 1 (“Is it possible to become happier?”; pp. 13-26); Chapter 2 (“How happy are you, and why?”; pp. 27-68); Chapter 3 (“How to find happiness activities that fit your

interests, your values, and your needs”; pp. 69-79), and Chapter 10 (“The five hows behind sustainable happiness”; pp. 257-281).
Layous, K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2014). The how, why, what, when, and who of happiness: Mechanisms underlying the success of positive interventions. In J. Gruber & J. T. Moskowitz (Eds.), *Positive emotion: Integrating the light sides and dark sides* (pp. 473-495). New York: Oxford University Press.

NO CLASS – THU, October 18: Generosity Conference

CLASS 7 – TUE, October 23: Introduction to Emotions and Their Measurement

Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., Chen, S., & Nisbett, R. E. Keltner, D. (in press). *Social psychology*. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 6 (“Emotion”; only pp. 195-200 are required).
Fredrickson, B. L. (2008). Promoting positive affect. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 449-468). New York: Guilford Press.

NO CLASS – THU, October 25: Midterm 1

CLASS 8 – TUE, October 30: Positive Emotions

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 10 (Review “The first how: positive emotion: pp. 257-266).
Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 2 (“I can’t be happy when...My relationship has fallen apart”; pp. 52-59 only).
Fredrickson, B. L., & Cohn, M. A. (2008). Positive emotions. In Lewis, M., Haviland-Jones, J. M., & Barrett, L. F. (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (3rd ed., pp. 777-796). New York: Guilford Press.
Fredrickson, B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1045-1062.

CLASS 9 – THU, November 1: Flow

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 7 (“Living in the present”; pp. 180-204).
Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2009). Flow theory and research. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.; pp. 195-206). New York: Oxford University Press.

Due: Happiness strategy exercise.

Assigned: VIA questionnaire.

CLASS 10 – TUE, November 6: What Are Strengths and Virtues?

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6 (“Character strengths”; pp. 137-164) and Chapter 5 (“Positive thinking”; pp. 107-136).

CLASS 11 – THU, November 8: Strengths and Virtues – Optimism

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 4 (“Cultivating optimism”; pp. 101-111).
Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 5 (“Positive thinking”; only pp. 107-112 and 119-124 are required).

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1993). On the power of positive thinking: The benefits of being optimistic. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2, 26-30.

Due: VIA questionnaire.

Assigned: Strength exercise (Develop Low Strength or Use Signature Strength).

CLASS 12 – TUE, November 13: Strengths and Virtues – Love

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 5 (“Nurturing social relationships”; pp. 138-149).

Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 1 (“I’ll be happy when...I’m married to the right person”; pp. 40-48 only).

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 10 (“Positive interpersonal relationships”; pp. 249-274).

NO CLASS – THU November 15: Midterm 2

CLASS 13 – TUE, November 20: How Happy Is Our Class?

NO READINGS & NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

NO CLASS – THU, November 22: Thanksgiving

CLASS 14 – TUE, November 27: Strengths and Virtues – Altruism

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 5 (“Practicing acts of kindness”; pp. 125-138).

Batson, C. D., Ahmad, N., & Lishner, D. A. (2009). Empathy and altruism. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.; only pp. 417-419 are required). New York: Oxford University Press.

CLASS 15 – THU, November 29: Strengths and Virtues – Forgiveness

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 6 (“Learning to forgive”; pp. 169-179).

Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). *The myths of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 2 (“I can’t be happy when...My relationship has fallen apart”; pp. 67-71 only).

McCullough, M. E. (2001). Forgiveness: Who does it and how do they do it? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 194-197.

Witvliet, C. v., Ludwig, T. E., & Vander Laan, K. L. (2001). Granting forgiveness or harboring grudges: Implications for emotion, physiology, and health. *Psychological Science*, 12, 117-123.

Due: Strength exercise.

CLASS 16 – TUE, December 4: Strengths and Virtues – Gratitude

Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness*. New York: Penguin Press. Chapter 4 (“Expressing gratitude”; pp. 88-101).

Emmons, R. A. (2008). Gratitude, subjective well-being, and the brain. In M. Eid & R. J. Larsen (Eds.), *The science of subjective well-being* (pp. 469-489). New York: Guilford Press.

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389.

Due: Extra-credit assignment (optional) due in section (Dec 3-5).

CLASS 17 – THU, December 6: Final Exam Review

NO READINGS & NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE

FINAL EXAM – THU, December 13: 11:30am-2:30pm

FRIDAY AFTERNOON (3pm or _____)

Where are you? (class, home, car, coffeeshop, etc.) _____

Are you alone? no yes

Are you interacting with anyone? (check one) no 1 person more than 1

If you are interacting with anyone, who is it? _____

What are you doing? (briefly) _____

How do you feel right now? Total PA: ____ Total NA: ____

	Not at all					Very strongly		
Impatient	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Competent / Able	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tense / Stressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Depressed / Blue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Focused / Engaged	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Affectionate / Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Calm / Relaxed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Irritated / Angry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sense of Meaning/Purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

FRIDAY EVENING (8pm or _____)

Where are you? (class, home, car, coffeeshop, etc.) _____

Are you alone? no yes

Are you interacting with anyone? (check one) no 1 person more than 1

If you are interacting with anyone, who is it? _____

What are you doing? (briefly) _____

How do you feel right now? Total PA: ____ Total NA: ____

	Not at all					Very strongly		
Impatient	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Competent / Able	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tense / Stressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Depressed / Blue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Focused / Engaged	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Affectionate / Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Calm / Relaxed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Irritated / Angry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sense of Meaning/Purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

SATURDAY MORNING (10am or _____) date: _____

Where are you? (class, home, car, coffeeshop, etc.) _____

Are you alone? ___ no ___ yes

Are you interacting with anyone? (check one) ___ no ___ 1 person ___ more than 1

If you are interacting with anyone, who is it? _____

What are you doing? (briefly) _____

How do you feel right now?

	Total PA: _____						Total NA: _____	
	Not at all						Very strongly	
Impatient	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Competent / Able	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tense / Stressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Depressed / Blue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Focused / Engaged	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Affectionate / Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Calm / Relaxed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Irritated / Angry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sense of Meaning/Purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

SATURDAY AFTERNOON (3pm or _____)

Where are you? (class, home, car, coffeeshop, etc.) _____

Are you alone? ___ no ___ yes

Are you interacting with anyone? (check one) ___ no ___ 1 person ___ more than 1

If you are interacting with anyone, who is it? _____

What are you doing? (briefly) _____

How do you feel right now?

	Total PA: _____						Total NA: _____	
	Not at all						Very strongly	
Impatient	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Competent / Able	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tense / Stressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Depressed / Blue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Focused / Engaged	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Affectionate / Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Calm / Relaxed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Irritated / Angry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sense of Meaning/Purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

SATURDAY EVENING (8pm or _____)

Where are you? (class, home, car, coffeeshop, etc.) _____

Are you alone? ___ no ___ yes

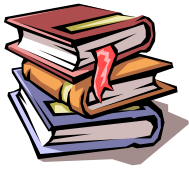
Are you interacting with anyone? (check one) ___ no ___ 1 person ___ more than 1

If you are interacting with anyone, who is it? _____

What are you doing? (briefly) _____

How do you feel right now? Total PA: ___ Total NA: ___

	Not at all						Very strongly
Impatient	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Competent / Able	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tense / Stressed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Happy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Depressed / Blue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Focused / Engaged	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Affectionate / Friendly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Calm / Relaxed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Irritated / Angry	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tired	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sense of Meaning/Purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6



Daily Mood, Behavior, and Situation Form Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS

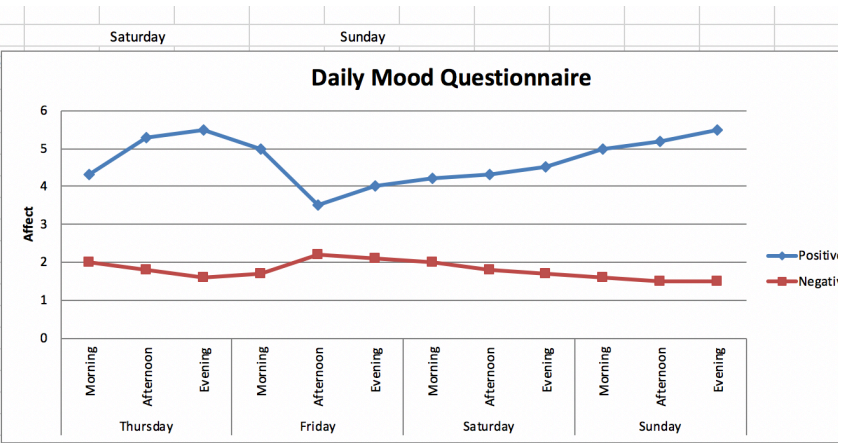
(DUE: January 14)

- (1) For each time period, compute (a) total PA (positive emotion terms) and (b) total NA (negative emotion terms), by *averaging* (taking the mean of) the 6 PA adjectives and the 5 NA adjectives, respectively. The key is provided below. You will end up with 12 PA means and 12 NA means (for each of the 12 time periods [4 days X 3 ratings]). Also, please write in each of these 12 values into the spaces provided next to each time period in your questionnaire (i.e., next to “Total PA” and “Total NA”). Please keep, staple, and hand in your questionnaire sheets, along with the rest of the assignment.

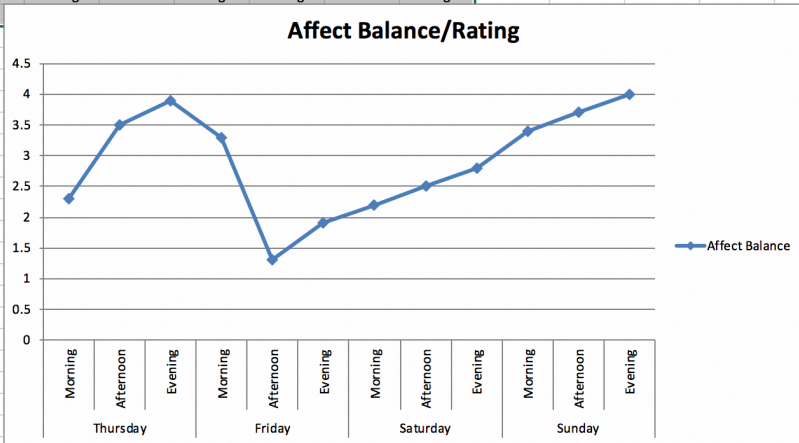
___ NA ___	Impatient
___ PA ___	Competent / Able
___ NA ___	Tense / Stressed
___ PA ___	Happy
___ NA ___	Depressed / Blue
___ PA ___	Focused/Engaged
___ PA ___	Affectionate / Friendly
___ PA ___	Calm / Relaxed
___ NA ___	Irritated / Angry
___ NA ___	Tired
___ PA ___	Sense of Meaning/Purpose

- (2) On the top of a piece of graph paper (which you can print off the web), graph the 12 PA values and the 12 NA values, with “affect rating” (0 to 6 scale) on the Y-axis and time (1 through 12, with days labeled) on the X-axis. Thus, you would make one graph with two jagged lines (one for PA and one for NA). You may use different colors to distinguish the two lines (PA and NA).
- (3) For each of the 12 time periods, compute a *difference score* between PA and NA (i.e., PA minus NA). On the bottom half of the same piece of graph paper, graph these 12 difference score values on the graph paper provided, with “affect rating” (-6 to +6 scale) on the Y-axis and time (1 through 12, with days labeled) on the X-axis. Note that if the difference score is positive at any particular time period, then you have experienced more positive affect than negative affect. If the difference score is negative, then you have experienced more negative affect than positive affect.
- (4) Write a minimum of two paragraphs, in which you describe your experience doing this assignment, such as any patterns in your moods and feelings that you have noticed (and the people, behaviors, or situations they are related to). Has doing this exercise given you any insights about exactly what it is about your daily life that makes you happy and fulfilled (e.g., offers you feelings of competence, engagement, interest, etc.) and what doesn't? When you're feeling your best, who are you with? What exactly are you doing? Where are you? What time of day is it? How can you modify your day and your activities in the future to make your life more rewarding and to help you flourish?

	Thursday			Friday		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Positive Aff	4.3	5.3	5.5	5	3.5	
Negative Af	2	1.8	1.6	1.7	2.2	

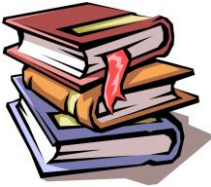


	Thursday			Friday			Saturday			Sunday		
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Affect Bala	2.3	3.5	3.9	3.3	1.3							



GENERAL NOTE:
PLEASE PICK AND DO ONE OF THE FOUR EXERCISES BELOW

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(modeled after exercises developed by Tracy Steen and Martin Seligman)



Gratitude Letter Exercise
DUE: Feb 6

Gratitude is a powerful tool for increasing life satisfaction because it amplifies good memories about the past. The goal of this exercise is for you to experience the power of expressing your gratitude to someone who has touched your life—not in a perfunctory way, but with much forethought and effort.

Instructions

The positive emotion of gratitude connects us to the kindness of others. Our society seems to lack gratitude rituals – i.e., formal ways of expressing thanks to those who have done well by us. Think of the people—parents, friends, teachers, coaches, teammates, employers, and so on—who have been especially kind to you but have never heard you express your gratitude. Write and rewrite a Gratitude Letter to one of these individuals, describing in concrete terms why you are grateful. The letter should be concrete: Specify in detail what they did for you, and exactly how it affected your life. Describe what you are doing now and how you often remember their efforts. Make it sing.

(OPT) If you can, deliver it personally and read the letter aloud to them in their presence. Call the person in advance and make an appointment with them. Do not tell them the purpose except vaguely. Then discuss with each other how you both feel about each other, about why you are grateful, and about the future.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max, typed) reflecting on the experience of expressing your gratitude. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. How did you feel as you wrote your letter?
2. (If applicable) How did the other person react to your expression of gratitude? And how were you affected by their reaction?
3. How long did these feelings last after you wrote or presented your letter?
4. Did you recall the experience in the days that followed the writing/reading of the letter? If so, how did this recollection affect your mood?
5. Have you thought of others with whom you wish to share your gratitude?

You may include a copy of the actual letter with your paper, but this is optional.

Example

Dear Mr. Atkinson,

As I think back to the three years you were my teacher, so many great memories came flooding back. I remember the little incident with the blackboard during freshman year. I remember you calling my house at the end of that year. The first thing you said was, "Don't piss me off, Tom," (jokingly, of course) then told me I got a 100 on the Sequential II Regents. You even took me out for ice cream.

I remember sophomore year, the emotion you showed when you told us about Mohammed's death. I had never seen a teacher cry until then, and realized then that teachers really do give a damn about their students. I remember you consoling me when I went through a bad break up, even though it was taking up valuable class time. I think we went out for ice cream that year too. I'll never forget the highlight of that year, getting accepted into the Penn Summer Science Academy. It was a wonderful feeling, but seeing how proud you were of me was an even greater thrill. Do you still have that picture hanging on the wall?

Did you know that I was incredibly upset that you didn't teach Pre- Calculus, so I didn't have you as a teacher my junior year? As good a teacher as Mr. Valentine was, I remember thinking that you would have done a better job. I think I may have been suffering from Mr. Atkinson withdrawal.

Out of all the teachers I had in high school, you were the first person I thought of for a recommendation when application time came. I knew you would be fair and honest, hoping that was a good thing. AP Calculus was probably the first time I really had trouble grasping math in school, and you patiently helped me through it, taking time to talk to me, do extra problems, and never gave up on me. You should also know that's it been four years, and I still can't get "don't sleep in the subway" out of my head.

I guess what I'm really trying to say is thank you. Thank you for seeing something inside of me, and not giving up on me. You pushed me to be my best, and I think you succeeded. You were sympathetic when I needed it, patient when I said or did something stupid. Above all else, you had a sense of humor. However warped and cracked it was, I always thought it was funny, even the bad jokes...

I hope the students you have now appreciate the gift they have in having you for a teacher. If they don't now, I'm sure someday they will. I knew you were a good teacher when I was in high school. It took graduating from college to realize that you were a great teacher. I hope this letter finds you well and happy. I look forward to seeing you in May.



Best Possible Future Selves Exercise

DUE: Feb 6

Optimism is a powerful tool for increasing happiness and life satisfaction because it boosts positive feelings about the future, increases self-efficacy, and leads to self-fulfilling prophecies. The goal of this exercise is for you to experience the power of optimistic thinking.

Instructions

Previous research has persuasively shown that writing expressively about oneself and one's feelings has numerous benefits for health, emotional adjustment, and well-being (see Smyth, 1998, for a review). In this exercise, you will visualize and write about your "best possible future selves." Possible selves have been defined as personalized representations of goals (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and comprise all of the futures that a person can envision for herself – that is, her "most cherished self-wishes" (Allport, 1961). Writing about one's possible selves thus can enhance self-regulation because it provides an opportunity to learn about oneself, to gain insight into and restructure one's priorities, and to understand better one's motives and emotional reactions. Writing about one's life goals may also be beneficial because it can reduce goal conflict (Pennebaker, 1998), as well as bring greater awareness and clarity to one's priorities, motivations, and values (Emmons, 1986, Little, 1989; Omodei & Wearing, 1990). Thus, this exercise may serve to integrate life experiences into a meaningful framework and allow you to gain a feeling of control. Finally, imagining success at one's life goals can boost psychological well-being (King, 2001), improve performance (Pham & Taylor, 1999), boost psychological adjustment (Rivkin & Taylor, 1999), and bring to bear a variety of benefits associated with positive thinking (Fordyce, 1983; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Ultimately, all of these benefits are hypothesized to increase and sustain your happiness level.

Adapting the writing procedure developed by King (2001), you will write for *20 minutes at a time* about different experiences and topics. Here are your specific instructions:

"Think about your life in the future. Imagine that everything has gone as well as it possibly could. You have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing all of your life goals. Think of this as the realization of all of your life dreams. Now, write about what you imagined."

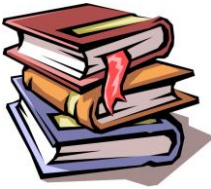
Do this for 15 to 20 minutes per day for three days in a row.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max, typed) reflecting on the experience of doing this exercise. Contemplate your experience of expressing your thoughts and feelings about the future. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. How did you feel before, during, and after the writing sessions?
2. How long did these feelings last after you finished each session and after you finished the last session?
3. Did you recall the experience in the days that followed the three sessions? If so, how did this recollection affect your mood?
4. Have your goals, plans, or actual behavior changed as a result of your writing sessions?

You may include a copy of the 3-days' worth of writing you did, but this is optional.



Savoring Exercise

DUE: Feb 6

Learning to savor pleasant moments throughout the day can have a big impact on our general level of happiness. This exercise requires you to practice savoring daily experiences three times a day for three days in a row (or up to a full week). You need not spend more than 2-3 minutes per savoring session to obtain the full benefits of this exercise.

Instructions

This exercise is about savoring—the ability to notice a pleasant experience and to make it last as long as possible and to be as intensely pleasurable as possible. Consider a typical weekday. Review your morning routine, your daily activities, and your evening rituals, and consider how much time you spend noticing and enjoying the pleasures of the day, both small and large.

- Do you linger over coffee or tea in the morning, enjoying the aroma even before your first sip, and then feeling the hot liquid warming you from within? Or do you mindlessly sip your coffee and eat your breakfast while busily attending to some other task?
- When you complete a major task at school, work, or home, do you take several moments to bask in the feeling of accomplishment or are you more likely to move on to the next item on your to-do list?
- At the end of a long day, do you enjoy how good it feels to change into comfortable nightclothes and snuggle under the covers? Or are you more likely to spend your final waking moments considering problems of the day and planning for the next?

Noticing and savoring life's small (and big) pleasures is a powerful tool for increasing your overall happiness. Every day for 3-7 days, be sure to savor at least three experiences (for example, your morning coffee, the sun on your face as you walk to class, the sound of your favorite person's voice). Spend at least 2-3 minutes savoring each experience.

Some tips to savor well:

1. You can seek out others to share the experience and tell others how much you value the moment.
2. Take mental photographs or even a physical souvenir of the event and reminisce about it later with others.
3. Tell yourself how impressed others are about an accomplishment and remember how long you've waited for this to happen.
4. Focus on certain elements or senses (the shape of something, taste, sound, smell) and block out others.
5. Let yourself get totally immersed and try not to think, just sense.

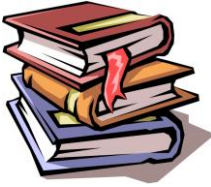
6. When you're trying to savor, do not remind yourself of other things you should be doing, or focus on what comes next, or think of ways in which the experience might be improved. When you find yourself thinking like this, do your best to distract yourself from it by returning your focus to the pleasurable experience.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max, typed) reflecting on the experience of doing this exercise. Contemplate your savoring experiences. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. How did you feel before, during, and after the savoring sessions?
2. How long did these feelings last after you finished each savoring session and after you finished the very last session?
3. Have you found yourself developing a habit of savoring, even after you finished your savoring days? If yes, how has it affected your mood (or your life in general). If not, why do you think that is?
4. Have your attitudes, perspective, or actual behavior changed as a result of your savoring sessions?

You may include a list of the types of savoring experiences you had, but this is optional.



Forgiveness Letter Exercise

DUE: Feb 6

This exercise is one of the more challenging exercises in this course. Like gratitude, forgiveness is a powerful tool for increasing positive emotion about the past. The bitterness that we feel toward someone who has wronged us can compromise our ability to lead the good life by causing us to ruminate frequently and remember this aspect of the past with anger. Through forgiveness, we can transform feelings of anger and bitterness into feelings of neutrality or even, for some, into positive emotions. This exercise is intended to help you learn to forgive.

Instructions

Forgiveness undoes our own hatred or bitterness and frees us from a troubled past. Research suggests that those who forgive are much more satisfied and serene than those who do not. Forgiveness can be difficult; and despite its apparent benefits, a person may have strong reasons regarding justice or immorality not to forgive, which should be respected. However, keep in mind the fact that forgiveness does not necessarily entail excusing an action or even choosing to associate again with someone who has wronged you. Some actions may indeed be inexcusable. But remember that forgiveness is a gift that you give yourself in that it allows you the freedom to live your life without the intrusion of the bitterness, anger, and/or humiliation you feel whenever you recall the hurtful person or event.

For this exercise, think of the people who have wronged you in the past and whom you have never explicitly forgiven. Which of these people persist in your memory and generate negative emotions from which you would like to free yourself? Choose one person you would like to forgive and write a letter of forgiveness to them. **Do not mail the letter—This exercise is for you, not them.** You may even write to a person no longer living. In the letter, describe in concrete terms how you were wronged by this person. How were you affected by the original transgression? And how have you continued to be hurt by the memory of the event? Be sure to end with an explicit declaration of forgiveness.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max, typed) reflecting on the experience of expressing your forgiveness. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. How did you feel as you wrote your letter?
2. How did your thoughts and feelings about the person change while you were writing the letter and after you finished writing it?
3. Were you successful in truly forgiving this person? Why or why not?
4. Did you recall the experience in the days that followed the writing of the letter? If so, how did this recollection affect your mood?
5. Have you thought of others you wish to or need to forgive?

You may include a copy of the actual letter with your paper, but this is optional.



“Using a Signature Strength More” Exercise

DUE: March 12

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage you to own your signature strengths by finding a *new and/or more frequent use* of one such strength. First, you will need to pick one of your signature strengths. Use the VIA questionnaire print-out or your own feelings or intuition as a guide. As described by Martin Seligman, a strength may be considered a *signature* strength if any of the following criteria apply:

- A sense of ownership and authenticity (“This is the real me”)
- A feeling of excitement while displaying it, particularly at first
- A rapid learning curve as the strength is first practiced
- A desire to find new ways to use it
- A feeling of inevitability in using the strength (“Try and stop me”)
- Invigoration rather than exhaustion while using the strength
- The creation and pursuit of personal projects that revolve around it
- Joy, zest, and enthusiasm while using the strength

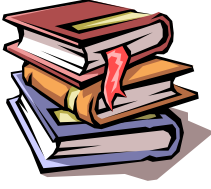
Instructions

Over the course of the next 7 to 10 days, create a designated time in your schedule when you will exercise one or more of your signature strengths in a new way either at work or at home or in leisure – just make sure that you make a clearly defined opportunity to use it. For example, someone whose signature strength is creativity may choose to set aside two hours one evening to begin working on a screenplay. Someone who identifies hope/optimism as a strength might write a column for the local newspaper in which she expresses hope about the future with regard to climate change. Someone who claims self-control as a strength might choose to work out at the gym rather than watch TV one evening.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max) about this experience, addressing most or all of the following questions:

- (1) What did you do?
- (2) How did you feel before, during, and after engaging in the “signature strength activity”?
- (3) Was the activity challenging? Easy?
- (4) Did time pass quickly? Do you plan to repeat it?
- (5) What did you learn from the experience?



“Developing Specific Strengths” Exercise

DUE: March 12

This exercise provides a structured opportunity for you to develop a character strength that you would like to possess to a greater degree.

Background

Students who take the *VIA Strengths Questionnaire* are often as curious about their “low” strengths as they are about their high strengths. Humanistic psychologists have suggested that we all have an innate desire to improve ourselves (e.g., see Rogers, 1995), and experience with students supports the presence of this desire with respect to character strengths. One of the criteria by which the *VIA* strengths were selected is that the strength is mutable, or capable of being developed to some degree. Thus, students who wish to develop a strength are likely to be rewarded for their efforts.

Although students may be motivated to develop certain strengths, they may also be at a loss for where to begin. Providing a start, Professor Jon Haidt from the University of Virginia compiled a list of suggested activities corresponding to each of 24 *VIA* strengths (see below, “Suggested Activities for Developing Strengths”). Because some activities engage multiple strengths, there is some overlap among the lists.

Key Points

- Although people possess different character strengths to different degrees, all character strengths are mutable. Unlike talents (which typically have a ceiling on their growth), character strengths have the potential for unlimited growth. There is virtually no limit on how kind, loyal, honest, or playful we can be.
- The way to strengthen or develop a “weak” character strength is by acting as though it is already one of our signature strengths – that is, by consciously engaging in them and repeatedly exercising them. We become more loyal by *being* loyal, we become more courageous by taking risks and doing brave things, and we become more curious by wondering about the world around us.
- With effort, we have the capacity to build upon our strengths to an extraordinary degree, and the pursuit of such greatness can bring much satisfaction to our lives.
- There are no shortcuts to developing strengths.

Instructions

First, review the feedback you received from your *VIA Strengths* survey. Think about whether there are any strengths aside from your own signature strengths that you

value and admire in other people. Choose a strength that you believe is currently one of your lower strengths but which you would like to develop. Read carefully through the list of suggested activities (next page) and, over the next 7 to 10 days, do one or more of the activities corresponding to the strength you have chosen to develop.

Write-Up

Write a short paper (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max) about your experience conducting this exercise. Which low strength did you choose and why? Describe exactly what you did to develop this low strength. How challenging was it for you to do the activity? How did you feel before, during, and after the activity? How successful were you? Would you like to do it again? And if so, would it be easier the second time? What did you learn from the experience? Please address most or all of these questions.

Suggested Activities for Developing Strengths

(Adapted from Haidt and Steen)

Curiosity and Interest in the World

- Decide to become an expert in a specialized topic and begin collecting (and reading) books on the subject.
- Take a class just for fun (cooking, yoga, auto mechanics, astronomy, etc.)
- Visit a museum.
- Visit a bookstore and pick an interesting book to skim. Try to select a book from a section that you wouldn't usually visit.
- Eat something you've never tried before.
- Explore your neighborhood on foot.
- Discover something new in the city or town where you live.
- Join an online forum for a topic that interests you (e.g., literature, pets, fitness, skincare, travel, physics, politics, etc.). See www.delphiforums.com for ideas.
- Subscribe to *National Geographic* or *Scientific American*.

Love of Learning

- Discover one new place in your city or town every day.
- Subscribe to a newspaper if you (or your parents) don't already.
- Take a class just for fun (cooking, yoga, auto mechanics, astronomy, etc.)
- Go to an online search engine like Ask Jeeves, ask a question, and explore sites you never otherwise would have discovered.
- Every day, read a chapter of a book just for fun.
- Decide to become an expert in a specialized topic and begin collecting (and reading) books on the subject
- Rent a movie in another language.

Judgment, Critical Thinking, and Open-Mindedness

- Visit the services of a religion that is unfamiliar to you
- Play devil's advocate and discuss an issue from the side opposite to your personal views.
- Take an acquaintance out to lunch who differs from you in a way that you believe is important.
- Every day, pick something you believe strongly, and think about how you might be wrong.

Creativity, Ingenuity, and Originality

- Keep a journal and allow yourself to write freely.
- Submit a piece to a literary magazine or newspaper.
- Make a gift or a card for a friend.
- Rearrange the furniture in your room.
- Pick one object in your room and devise another use for it rather than its intended use.
- Learn a new word everyday (perhaps at dictionary.com) and actually use it in conversation.

- Cook something “from scratch.” Try to make a meal by combining whatever is in your refrigerator. (Note: This requires the character strength of judgment as well!)

Social Intelligence

- The next time you make a purchase at a store, ask the salesperson how he or she is doing, and mean it.
- Go into a social situation in which you would normally feel uncomfortable.
- Whenever you talk with someone, try to figure out what his or her motives and concerns are.
- Encounter someone who is alone and, by being friendly, include that person in your group.
- Notice whether you unintentionally interrupt people when you are talking with them. Make a point to slow down the pace of conversation.
- Practice really listening while someone else is talking.

Perspective (Wisdom)

- Get a quote a day online (see www.quoteaday.com)
- Give advice to an upset friend.
- Think of the wisest person you know. Try to live each day as that person would live.
- Look up prominent people in history and learn their views on important issues of their day.
- Read the works of great thinkers and religious leaders (e.g., Gandhi, Buddha, Jesus, Maimonides, Mother Theresa).
- Volunteer at a nursing home and talk with residents about their lives and the lessons they have learned.
- Subscribe to two news editorial publications that are on opposite ends of the political spectrum (e.g., The National Review for the conservative perspective and The Nation for the liberal perspective). Read them both and consider both sides of the issues.

Valor

- Go against peer pressure or social norms.
- Stand up for someone even if you disagree with him/her.
- Dance in public if you are usually too shy to do so.
- Introduce yourself to someone you see daily at school but with whom you have never spoken.
- Speak up for an unpopular idea (if you believe in it).

Industry, Diligence, and Perseverance

- Finish a project ahead of time.
- Notice your thoughts about stopping a task, and make a conscious effort to dismiss them. Focus on the task at hand.
- Begin using a time management aid of some sort (a palm pilot, a daily planner, etc.). Find a system that works and actually use it.
- Set a goal and create a plan for sticking to it.

- When you wake up in the morning, make a list of things that you want to get done that day that could be put off until the next day. Make sure to get them done that day.

Honesty, Authenticity, and Genuineness

- Refrain from telling small, white lies to friends (including insincere compliments). If you do tell one, admit it and apologize right away.
- Monitor yourself and make a list of every time you tell a lie, even if it is a small one. Try to make your daily list shorter every day.
- At the end of each day, identify those instances in which you were attempting to impress others or appear to be someone you are not. Resolve not to do it again.

Zest, Enthusiasm, and Energy

- Go out of your way to become more involved in an organization to which you already belong.
- Do something because you want to do it, not because you have to do it.
- Get a good night's sleep and eat a good breakfast to give yourself more energy during the day.
- Do something physically vigorous in the morning (e.g., go for a run, do power yoga, jump on a mini-trampoline, do an exercise video, etc.).
- Find your passion. What do you love to do? If you already know what your passion is, then build time for it in your schedule. If you don't, then try to discover it. What did you love to do when you were younger? Try it again now.

Kindness and Generosity

- Leave a huge tip for a small check.
- Do a random act of kindness every day (a simple, small favor). Make it anonymous if possible.
- Be a listening ear to a friend. Ask your friend how her day was and actually listen and respond to her before describing your own day.
- Send an e-card to a different friend each day.
- Pay the whole tab next time you are out with friends (if you can afford to do so!).
- Give someone else the gift of time – do something for someone else that requires time and effort on your part.
- The next time someone admires something of yours and you can afford to do without it, give it away.
- Volunteer in your community.

Capacity to Love and be Loved

- Tell boyfriend/girlfriend/sibling/parent that you love them.
- Send a loved one a card or e-card to say that you were thinking about him/her.
- Give loved ones a big hug and a kiss
- Write a nice note where someone you love will find it sometime during the day. Do this in a new place, or for a new person, every day.
- Make a list of the people in your life who love you. Write a letter to them thanking them for their love.

Citizenship and Teamwork

- Volunteer in the community.
- Take on an added responsibility within an organization to which you already belong. If you do not belong to any organizations, join one of interest.
- Pick up litter that you see on the ground.
- Clean and beautify a communal area in your neighborhood/building.

Fairness, Equity, and Justice

- When others express an opinion, practice simply listening to them without judgment. Wait until they have stopped talking and you completely understand them before you consider your own opinion.
- Stay impartial in an argument between friends despite your beliefs. (Be the mediator.)
- Notice when you treat someone based on a stereotype or pre-conception; resolve not to do it again.
- Defend someone who is not present.
- Stop gossiping. Don't say something about another person that you would not be willing to say in their presence.
- Do your part to combat social injustice in your community.
- Help others who have not had the same opportunities/advantages that you have. Teach an adult to read, help a child without parents, lobby to make a public building more accessible to those with disabilities, etc.

Leadership

- Organize a fun activity for your friends this weekend.
- Start a study group for one of your more difficult classes.
- Find a political or social cause that interests you and rally some friends to join you in an effort to make a difference.

Modesty

- Don't talk about yourself at all for a full day.
- Dress and act modestly, so as not to attract attention to yourself.
- Find a way in which someone you know is better than you. Compliment him or her for it.

Self-Control and Self-Regulation

- Set aside 2 hours (or other designated amount of time) and *actually* study in a quiet place.
- Work out four days a week (if you don't already).
- Clean or organize your room. Every day, make sure that you pick up whatever mess you made during the day.
- Leave something unfinished on your plate that you usually regret eating afterwards.
- When something upsets you, attempt to block it out of your mind and instead focus on the good things in your life.

- Make a resolution not to gossip. When you feel the urge to talk about someone behind his or her back, remember your resolution and stop yourself before you talk.
- In the evenings, make an agenda for the following day. Stick to that agenda.
- When you become overly emotional about something, calm down and calmly consider all of the issues again.

Caution, Prudence, and Discretion

- During a conversation, think twice before saying anything. Weigh the probable effect of your words on others.
- Think about the motto “Better safe than sorry” at least three times a day. Try to incorporate its meaning into your life.
- Before you decide to do something important, reflect on it for a moment and consider if you want to live with its consequences 1 hour, 1 day, or 1 year later.

Forgiveness and Mercy

- Think of someone that you found it very hard to forgive. Try to see the situation from their perspective. Then consider the following question: If you had been the one to do the offensive act, would you have expected to be forgiven?
- Keep a journal, and every night, describe someone who made you mad or against whom you have a grudge. After writing about the grudge, describe why you are resistant to forgiving them. Then try to describe the situation from their point of view. Forgive them if possible.
- Make contact with someone who has made you mad in the past. Let them know that you forgive them, or just be kind to them in your conversation.
- When someone does something that you do not understand, try to fathom his or her intentions in the actions.

Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence

- Go to a museum and pick out a piece of artwork or a display that has aesthetic value and touches you because of its beauty.
- Write down your thoughts about a piece of art, or something beautiful you see outdoors.
- Take a walk with a friend and comment on something attractive that you see.
- Attend a concert and enjoy the sound for its musical value. Or pick out the most moving music you know of, and listen to it appreciatively on headphones every night. Or ask a friend to recommend the most beautiful music he or she knows.
- Keep a journal, and every night, record something you saw during the day that struck you as extremely beautiful or skillful.
- Find something or someone that you find beautiful or excellent and let it/them inspire you throughout the day.
- Visit the Fine Arts section of a library or bookstore and browse through the art books.

Gratitude

- Keep a journal, and each night, make a list of three things that you are thankful for in life.

- Every day, thank someone for something that you might otherwise take for granted (e.g., thanking the janitor who cleans your hallways).
- Keep a record of the number of times you use the words “thank you” in a day. Over the course of the first week, try to double the number of times that you say the words.
- Call a parent/sibling/friend each day to say thank you for the positive influences he or she has had on you. Be specific. For example, you might thank a sister for giving you good advice when you were experiencing conflict with your parents.
- Send someone a “thank you” e-greeting.
- Leave a note on a friend’s desk or locker thanking them for something about them that you appreciate.

Hope, Optimism, and Future-Mindedness

- Keep a journal, and every night, record a decision you made that day that will impact your life in the long run
- When you are in a bad situation, turn it around to see the optimistic/positive side of it. You can almost always find some good in a situation, regardless of how awful it seems at the time.
- Make a list of bad decisions you have made. Forgive yourself and move on in life, realizing that you can only move forward (not backward) in life.
- Notice your negative thoughts. Counter them with positive thoughts.
- Reaffirm to yourself that you can and will succeed at whatever you put your mind to.

Spirituality and Sense of Purpose, and Faith

- For 5 minutes a day, relax and think about the purpose of life, and where you fit in.
- For 5 minutes a day, think about the things you can do to improve the world or your community.
- Read a religious or spiritual book, or go to a religious service every day.
- Explore different religions. You can do this by going to a library, looking on the Internet, or asking your friends about their religions.
- Spend a few minutes a day in meditation or prayer.
- Invest in a book of affirmations or optimistic quotes. Read a few every day.

Humor and Playfulness

- Every day, make someone smile or laugh.
- Learn a joke and tell it to your friends.
- Watch a funny movie or TV show.
- Read the comics.
- Learn a magic trick and perform it for your friends.



VIA Questionnaire Exercise

DUE: February 13

This is a simple exercise.

- 1) Take the VIA questionnaire (it's labeled "VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire" on the Authentic Happiness Web site) yourself by visiting <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>. Note that you'll need to register first.
- 2) Copy down or take a screenshot of the results. (You'll need to attach the list of the 5 strengths to your paper.)

In your write-up (1-2 double-spaced pages, 3 max, typed), address the following questions:

- 1) Were you surprised by any of the results?
- 2) How might you use your strengths more frequently?
- 3) How might you use your strengths in love, friendship, leisure, and parenting, as well as academics/work?
- 4) Were all of the top 5 your "signature" strengths?
- 5) Do you get to deploy at least one of these strengths every day at UCR?