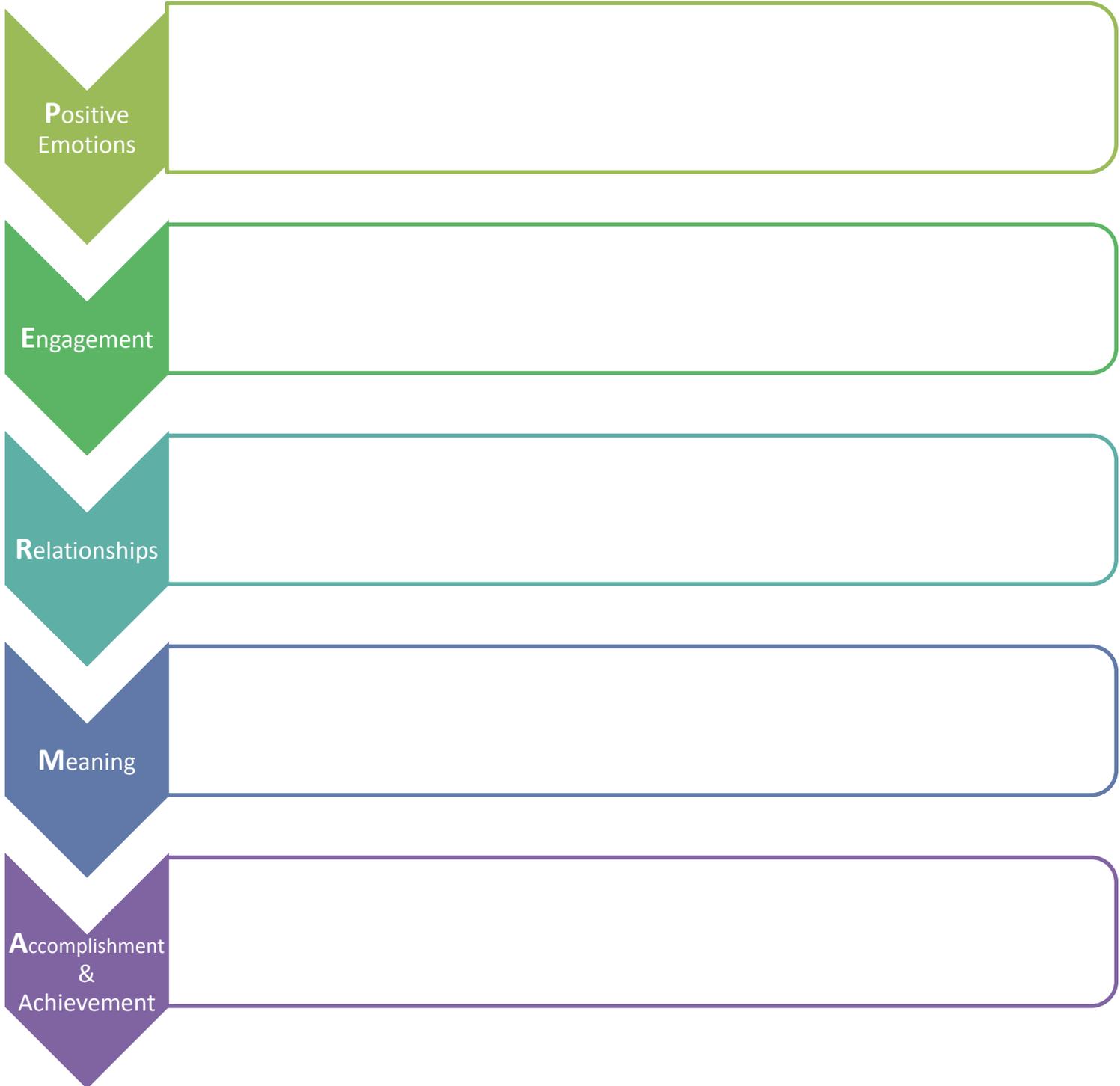


PERMA the building blocks to Unleash Well-Being

The Pleasant Life: filling your life with as many pleasures as you can

The Good Life: where you find a life in your work, parenting, love and leisure

The Meaningful Life: which "consists of knowing what your highest strengths are, and using them to belong to and in the service of something larger than you are". The "Meaningful Life" is at the core of PERMA.



Ideas & Practices to Cultivate PERMA

(P) Positive Emotions (*Building a Positivity Toolkit***)

Cultivate Core Desired Feelings: How do you want to feel? What need is below the feeling? (see feelings list in the notes section).

- Figure out how you want to feel: What are 3 things that help you come alive - that bring more joy, curiosity, and happiness?
- What are you doing in this area right now that's working?
- Where do you need support and who can you ask?

Make your motto: "Be open": Notice your rigid expectations. Get curious about and pay attention to the present moment, especially when you're feeling overwhelmed, agitated, or sad. **Example:** On your morning walk into work, rather than being lost in your expanding to-do list, let your senses be your guide: what can you see, smell, hear, taste, touch while being open to nature? What beauty or goodness can you stay open to?

Develop distractions for negative thinking: To avoid rumination, keep a list of and engage in *healthy* distractions, physical, intellectual, and otherwise, and try not to numb yourself out. Distractions serve the purpose of breaking the grip of ruminations, and obsessive thinking which cause endless negativity.

- Make lists of healthy vs. unhealthy distractions. Healthy distractions might include going to a bike ride, walking your dog, playing a game with your kid or a friend, reading a novel, etc. Unhealthy distractions might include eating, drinking alcohol, playing a video game or shopping to feel better.
- Dispute the negative thoughts: Catch your inner critic in the act and find the truth. Self-dispute your typical negative thoughts.

Find nature nearby: Whether to socialize, exercise, or be one with the surroundings, get out there. Make these places regular destinations for you and your friends.

Create space each day for stillness:

- **Mindfulness:** Sit in a quiet place for five or ten minutes and take a few deep breaths. Notice how it feels. Where do you feel your breath? Continue to observe your breath. The goal is to attend to your breath, to practice being present, right here and now. Invariably, your mind will wander. Let it wander- don't attempt to suppress your thoughts but notice your mind and accept where it is going and breathe through it. Continue to stay present.
- **Loving kindness:** Start by focusing on your breath and the region of your heart. Once you are grounded there, reflect on a person for whom you have warm, tender or compassionate feelings. Your goal is to rouse warm and natural feelings by visualizing how being with this loved person makes you feel. After a while, let go of your image of that person and hold the feeling.

Look for the positive: Which wolf are you feeding? Don't let the good be fleeting, drink it in, and replay it in your mind. Share good news with others so that it continues to have life. Think of a moment from yesterday or last week when you enjoyed something delightful or silly. Allow your mind to feel the good feelings and expand them into even bigger moments of celebration.

Visualize your future: Where and how would you be if your dreams came true? Pull out a journal and have fun with it. Imagine yourself five years from now after everything has gone as well as it possibly could. You have succeeded and accomplished all the goals you could have accomplished. Write these down over the course of several days or a week. After a week or so, review what you've written and draw out from your dreams, a life mission. What purpose do you want to drive you each day? What's the meaning of your life? Soak in these tough questions and get your ideas on paper, crafting a mission statement. Create a five year plan to make this mission statement happen. Bring it down to small bullet points. Anchor those plans with feelings; let them be your guide.

(E) Engagement

Three Good Things: Science is showing that gratitude is important for how good we feel psychologically and socially. It increases how much positive emotion we feel and decreases negative emotions. By recording three good things that happen each day, we're consciously spending time focusing on what's going right, not just on what's going wrong.

- Every night before you go to bed, think about your day and **remember three good things that happened** (it can be big or small things, you'll probably find it varies. Try doing this for a week to start with.
- **Think about why-** for each thing you're grateful for; write down why it happened and why you feel good about it.
- After a week, **look back on what you've written.** Do you notice any themes? How does it feel when you look at all these good things?

Identify Signature Strengths: **The VIA Survey of Character Strengths** (www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu) is a free assessment from the University of Pennsylvania that measures core character strengths. When we know what our strengths are and can activate them during high stress and overwhelm, we're better able to handle and bounce back from trauma.

- Which strengths give you the most energy when you use them? How could you use them more?
- How could you use your strengths differently – in a different context or when you're feeling a lot of stress?
- What hobbies/interests do you have and how do your strengths contribute? Are there other interests you feel energy toward developing on the basis of your strengths?

(R) Positive Relationships

Create high quality connections with people: Be present to and affirming of others. Cultivate trust and practice playfulness. You can literally feel high quality connections because these resonate within your body. There are four ways to build high quality connections-

- Be present and affirming.
- Support what the other person is doing.
- Trust- depend on this person to meet your expectations and let it show.
- Play- allow yourself to be with this person sometimes with no outcomes in mind.

The Gratitude Visit: Consider making a gratitude visit to someone who has done something important, been especially kind or helpful to you but who you have never properly thanked. Reflect on the benefits you received from this person, write a letter expressing your gratitude, and make arrangements to personally deliver the letter and discuss what you wrote.

Active Constructive Responding (ACR): How would you react to this situation? Your significant other comes home (or your close friend calls on the phone) with the news, "I just got promoted." Gable describes four ways that you could react to this news:

- **Constructive**
Active: (ACR) *** "Really? Tell me more... How did you hear the news? What will be new?" ***
Passive: "That sounds good." (Little emotion)
- **Deconstructive**
Active: "Well, you know that means you'll be away from home more... Are you sure you've thought about it?"
Passive: "Can we talk about what happened to me today?"

Try saying, "What else happened?" (Active) "Can we celebrate?" (Active) "What about this is most exciting to you?"

(M) Meaning

Create Your Personal Mission Statement: What's your reason for getting up in the morning? What makes you come alive? Your mission statement combines your Gifts (what you have to offer the world) + Passion + Values = Your Calling
For a deeper dive, read Richard Leider's book, *The Power of Purpose*.

Savoring Life's Joys: According to the American Heritage Dictionary, to savor is "to appreciate fully, enjoy or relish." Savoring involves paying full attention to something in our experience. Savoring also involves engaging in the experience. Relish the simple goodness all around you, in other words, slow an activity down, something that you usually rush through or ignore. A child's smile, a delicious meal, a hot bath, feeling the breeze or the sunshine on your face as you're walking from the parking garage to work, snuggling with a pet, etc. One of the tricks is to really get into the moment **and try to make the pleasure last as long as possible**.

Ritualize gratitude: Being grateful means you to notice the gifts and appreciate people who surround you. When you are leaving a place, even say a hotel room, silently thank that place for supporting you in whatever experience occurred there.

Cultivate kindness: Give yourself the goal of performing 2 acts of kindness each day. Find new ways to make even the smallest of difference in other people's lives, every day. Assess what those around you may need most. Find positive ways to make a difference in the lives of others.

Commit one random act of kindness a week - - be warned, once you start, it's hard to stop! 😊 Here's a great website to give you ideas: actsofkindness.org/: A treasure trove of ideas, *materials, activities, lesson plans, project directions, teacher's guide, project planning guide, publicity guide, and workplace resources – all free of charge*.

(A) Accomplishment & Achievement

Increase Flow Experiences: When do you lose track of time and feel completely immersed in a task? If challenges are too low, you're bored. If the challenge is too much, you feel overwhelmed. Flow is the balance point where you're challenged just enough and have the skills to engage in the challenge. For more information, read FLOW by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

Wellbeing Activities: Invite yourself to cultivate 2-3 the following wellbeing activities daily:

- Exercise*
- Nutrition*
- Time in Nature
- Relationships*
- Recreation & Enjoyable Activities*
- Relaxation & Stress Management*
- Spiritual Involvement
- Contribution & Service

*Programs & resources offered by UK Health & Wellness and UK WorkLife

PERMA Resources (to get you started)

Some Basic Feelings We All Have



Feelings when needs are fulfilled

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| • Amazed | • Fulfilled | • Joyous | • Stimulated |
| • Comfortable | • Glad | • Moved | • Surprised |
| • Confident | • Hopeful | • Optimistic | • Thankful |
| • Eager | • Inspired | • Proud | • Touched |
| • Energetic | • Intrigued | • Relieved | • Trustful |

Feelings when needs are not fulfilled

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| • Angry | • Discouraged | • Hopeless | • Overwhelmed |
| • Annoyed | • Distressed | • Impatient | • Puzzled |
| • Concerned | • Embarrassed | • Irritated | • Reluctant |
| • Confused | • Frustrated | • Lonely | • Sad |
| • Disappointed | • Helpless | • Nervous | • Uncomfortable |

Some Basic Needs We All Have



Autonomy

- Choosing dreams/goals/values
- Choosing plans for fulfilling one's dreams, goals, values

Celebration

- Celebrating the creation of life and dreams fulfilled
- Celebrating losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. (mourning)

Integrity

- Authenticity • Creativity
- Meaning • Self-worth

Interdependence

- Acceptance • Appreciation
- Closeness • Community
- Consideration
- Contribution to the enrichment of life
- Emotional Safety • Empathy

Physical Nurturance

- Air • Food
- Movement, exercise
- Protection from life-threatening forms of life: viruses, bacteria, insects, predatory animals
- Rest • Sexual expression
- Shelter • Touch • Water

Play

- Fun • Laughter

Spiritual Communion

- Beauty • Harmony
- Inspiration • Order • Peace

- Honesty (the empowering honesty that enables us to learn from our limitations)
- Love • Reassurance
- Respect • Support
- Trust • Understanding

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Flourish by Dr. Martin Seligman || website: *Authentic Happiness Research Homepage* at the University of Pennsylvania, wellbeing assessments, research and resources: www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx

Desire Map by Danielle Laporte, How to cultivate your Core Desired Feelings || www.daniellelaporte.com/thedesiremap/

Flow by Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi || a fabulous TED talk video on flow: www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow

How of Happiness by Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky || thehowofhappiness.com/

Nonviolent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg || www.nonviolentcommunication.com

Positivity by Dr. Barbara Fredrickson** || (positivity toolkit), PH.D and her website, www.positivityratio.com/

Thrive by Dan Buettner || <http://www.bluezones.com/about/>

*University of KY Health & Wellness Resources: www.uky.edu/HR/wellness/