

Strengths

The Science of Happiness: Theory and Practice

Strengths



Strengths



“The happiest people are those that have discovered their unique strengths and virtues and use those gifts for a purpose that is greater than their own personal goals.”

~ Martin Seligman ~

What are Strengths?



- Strengths: ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that:
 - Facilitate optimal functioning
 - Are energizing
 - Are intrinsically motivating
- Signature Strengths are central to a person's sense of identity

Strengths and Happiness

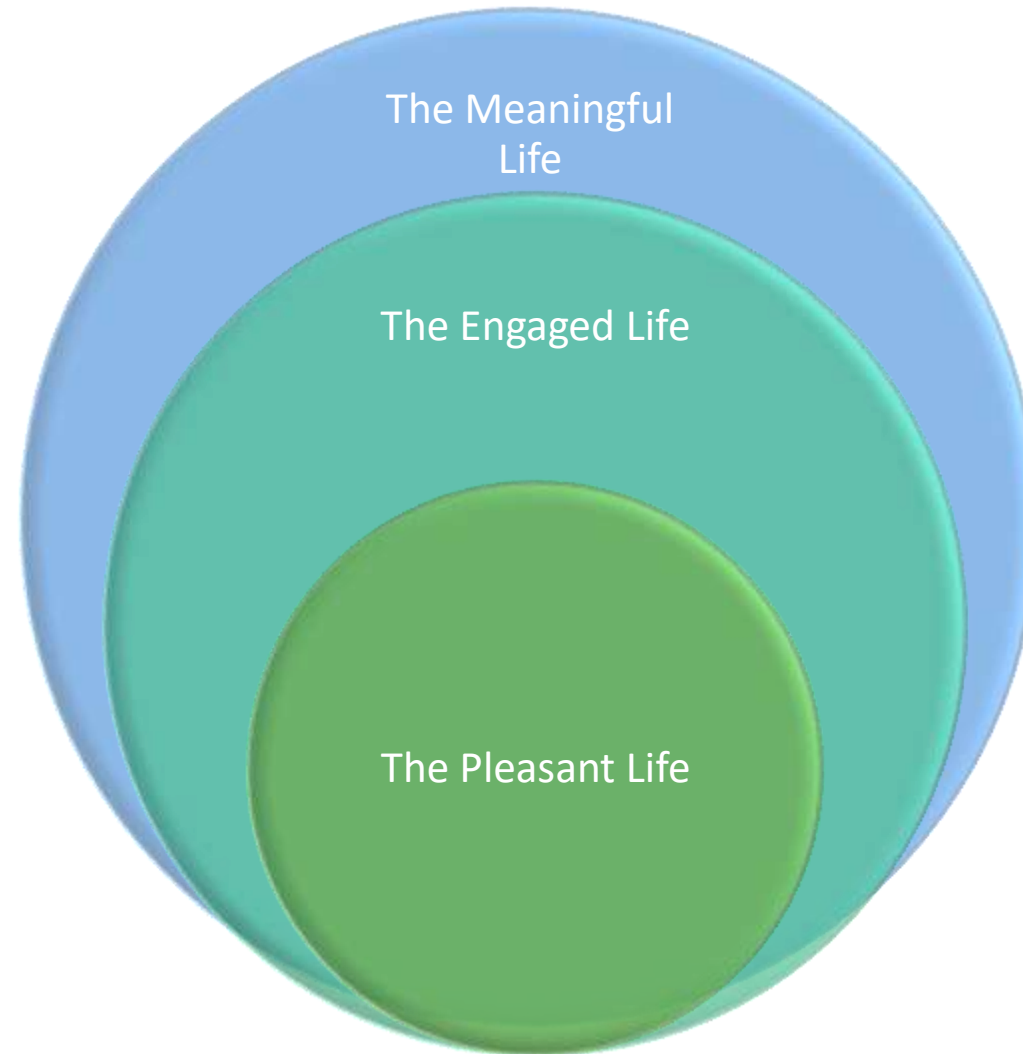


Strengths are strongly related to 2 out of 3 of Martin Seligman's Dimensions of Happiness:

- The Pleasant Life
- The Engaged Life
- The Meaningful Life

Strengths

Seligman's Three Dimensions of Happiness



The Pleasant Life



Is realized if we learn to savor and appreciate what we are doing in the present moment.

The Engaged Life



- The “Engaged Life” Is achieved through discovering our unique (signature) strengths, and employing them creatively to enhance our lives.
- Self image and self-esteem are reinforced if we discover value within ourselves by discovering our strengths.

The Meaningful Life



- In the Meaningful Life, we find a deep sense of fulfillment by implementing our unique strengths for a purpose greater than ourselves.
- Confucius: “The Chunzi (noble person) cultivates himself, and thus brings peace to humanity.”

Psychologists Speak about Their Signature Strengths



Strengths: Key Points

- **The two pillars of Positive Psychology**
 - Strengths
 - Positive Emotions
- **Strengths play a leading role in 2 out of 3 dimensions of happiness**
 - The Pleasant Life
 - The Engaged Life
 - The Meaningful Life
- **Signature Strengths are central to identity and self-image**
 - Humility, humor, prudence, zest, creativity, etc.

Key Scientific Studies on Strengths

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- Proctor, C., Maltby, J., & Linley, P. A. (2011). Strengths use as a predictor of well-being and health-related quality of life. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 12*(1), 153 – 169. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-009-9181-2>
- Wood, A. M., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., Kashdan, T. B., & Hurling, R. (2011). Using personal and psychological strengths leads to increases in well-being over time: A longitudinal study and the development of the strengths use questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 50*(1), 15-19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.004>
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