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Research Project: Draft #1

ENG112

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Flourishing your Happiness and Well-Being with Gratitude

Intro:

I sigh loudly in disbelief, there were so many things I felt like I needed to study before my Communications exam at nine in the morning. My anxiety twists my stomach when I think of the worst outcome of the test. I value my grades and waited until the last minute to study. I kept myself up with coffee and tears, feeling overwhelmed and distressed. I would reflect on my notes and create flash-cards for material and terms. After creating them, I go over the notes in highlighter and group them. My bed is stained from pen marks and crowded by papers. Even though I've been up all night studying the material, I still feel so anxious about it. My eyes begin to burn and I notice it is two in the morning. I decided to sleep and review my progress in the morning before class. When I awake, my mother gives me a motivational pep-talk to get me through the day and I get ready. Then, nine rolls around and it's time for all of my studying to go to work. I look forward to reviewing answers with my professor and class after completing the test. After taking it, the classroom remained silent and I was still unsure about my results. Turns out, after the class reviewed the test scores, I got a 100%! I also managed to get the extra credit points achieving a 53/50. It felt amazing to accomplish and I felt relieved I got it over with and could rely on myself.

Everyone desires to live life to the fullest and find what makes life worth living. There are science-based practices and resources to explore this desire. The “Three Good Things” gratitude process is a qualitative study within a week’s span. Every day for a week you list three moments you are thankful for and then analyze the data to impact your person or well-being in a manner. A moment of gratitude can be re-evaluated and create a deeper meaning with reflection.

Thesis:

The “Three Good Things” process positively impacts a person’s life with improvement within themselves and, or on a larger scale. Recognizing gratitude personally had a positive impact on my well being because I remained positive through the experiment, felt social belonging, and achieved more accomplishments than I would’ve during a regular week.

Lit Review:

There are many aspects to self-growth and improvement that can be enhanced by using positive psychology. “*Positive psychology* is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living” (Peterson 2008). It can be used as a tool to stay optimistic and find what makes life most valuable. The main focus is to enhance and build positivity that will be beneficial to your life. According to the University Of Pennsylvania-Psychology Center, “The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.” Serving purpose to strengthen many aspects of life in general.

Positive Psychology is genuinely focused on the healthier perspective of life and situations that can affect well-being. “*Well-Being*: A state of happiness, being pleased and content, low degrees of anguish, generally positive physical and cognitive health and attitude, or

good quality of life” (Psychology Dictionary 2018). It can be related to satisfaction or happiness, but is essential to a person’s overall health. A website *familydoctors.org* stated, “People who have good emotional health are aware of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. They have learned healthy ways to cope with the stress and problems that are a normal part of life. They feel good about themselves and have healthy relationships”. Having stable mental health is fundamental to life which allows people to live strong and confidently.

In addition, psychologists have found gratitude plays a major role in well-being. Gratitude can be conceptualized in various ways but, has many definitions. However, “*gratitude* is the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself; it is a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation” (A. Sanson 2010). Gratitude serves as positive reinforcement throughout life. It spreads positivity, boosts meaning, and builds a foundation of values.

The “Three Good Things” scientific study is an outlet to explore whether gratitude improves well-being or not. Psychiatry MMC explains, “Experiencing gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciation tends to foster positive feelings, which in turn, contribute to one's overall sense of well being”. The same article also elaborates on other experiments and as well as explain the counterfactuals of the study. Not all people are fit for the process due to their coping mechanisms.

Through my own experience with this exercise, I’ve been using my weakness’ to learn and grow. Participating in a longitudinal study forced me to recognize my bad habits that were damaging me and avoid them. Also, to adopt additional coping methods and value life from another perspective.

In this section I will prove “three good things” positively impacted and improved my well-being by discussing these few points. Starting with doubt, the process, then how applying the “P.E.R.M.A” Model helped me recognize some of the most special, simple moments that mean the most. Moments that ensure happiness or strengthen your well-being.

In the beginning I doubted the process, I felt it was annoying to write everyday. But when applying the “P.E.R.M.A” model, I was able to analyze and distinguish my gratitude moments from each other. The model is a scientific theory used in Positive Psychology and is composed of 5 components. Where each letter represents it's own meaning. P, is for positive emotion, pleasure and enjoyment. E, mainly for engagement or flow. R, meaning relationships, social belonging, and connections. M, for meaning, purpose, or fulfillment. Finally, A for accomplishments, and achievement. That also contributed to my positive reflection process. It was required to document three moments of gratitude every day for a week and reflect on them. I was given the opportunity to improve my relationships, become more involved in activities and experience less stress. Also to improve my happiness overall by revealing the light of my week and taking away stressors that affected me more in the moment negatively.

Importantly, the “P.E.R.M.A” model can be implemented into the gratitude process to create a different perspective. It provides different lenses to view gratitude values and strengthens their worth. In addition, it identifies which components were most applicable. Which gave me a deeper knowledge of myself by indicating what I most value within a short span of time.

opening anecdote/conclusion

Reflecting on my personal experience with the gratitude process I was able to recognize my weakness' and learn from them. Viewing the scene through a different lense gave me strength and confidence within myself. Even after being satisfied with my results, I still wanted to approach the process in a positive, alternative way. I used the process as a tool to realize where my actions were hurting me. Which gave me positive intentions and goals to handle stressful situations in a less damaging way. After going through this negative experience my reflection readdressed the situation and led to self growth.

I have not attempted this process again but, I plan to for my benefit. I believe it would influence me to be thankful, optimistic and stronger. I've recommended it to many people and have learned majorly from research and personal experience.

WORKS CITED:/ Annotated Bib?

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