

the LETTER

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Psychology for the New Millennium

In the first issue of THE LETTER, Lou and Diane described the purpose of this publication in the following language: "THE LETTER... will help keep all of us up to date on information applicable to the concepts we teach at The Pacific Institute, including book reviews, abstracts, and new theories by those in the behavioral and biological disciplines interested in cognitive science and mind/body relationships." Lou and Diane further asked that THE LETTER include research and success stories with the following instructions: "We stress the importance of validating your success stories with documentation that demonstrates the effectiveness of our education... We do not ask that these validating procedures be of the sort that would be required in the preparation of a manuscript for publication in a professional journal. It is important to include some numbers, percentages or anecdotes that will indicate to the non-scientist, intelligent consumer and to our clients that our education helps produce the outcomes they want."

In keeping with the charge given us by Lou and Diane, this issue of THE LETTER will focus on a trend described in the

millennial issue, January 2000, of *American Psychologist*, the official journal of the American Psychological Association. This is a Special Issue, one devoted to a single topic considered to be significant enough to the discipline to warrant the "Special Issue" designation.

Fortuitously, the topic of the Special Millennial Issue referred to above, is *Happiness, Excellence, and Optimal Human Functioning*, concepts that are of great importance to us, as expressed in our mission statement, and specifically in terms of the vision we have regarding the impact of our education on our clients.

It is not surprising that the senior author of the millennial issue of the *American Psychologist* is Martin Seligman, for several years a consultant of The Pacific Institute and keynote speaker at several of our global conferences. Professor Seligman has been featured in two issues of THE LETTER - Spring 1998 and Summer/Fall 1999 - where references were made to his "psychology of hope." This is a term he uses to describe his belief that it is time for psychologists to devote their attention to the enormous potential of human

beings. In the words of the title of the millennial issue, it is time for scholars to focus on how we can lead lives filled with "happiness, excellence and optimal human performance." Albert Bandura, another long time consultant to The Pacific Institute and featured in two issues of THE LETTER - Winter 1998 and Summer/Fall 1999 - has devoted many years to the development of his self-efficacy theory, (supported by countless studies by Bandura, his current and former students and many others) which predicts excellence and optimal human performance more accurately than any theory ever propounded, in the opinion of your editor. Four of the fifteen papers in the *American Psychologist* under review here mention several of Bandura's publications that contribute to our knowledge of the role of self- and collective-efficacy in the development of excellence and optimal human functioning.

In their introductory chapter, Seligman and his co-editor, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, perhaps best known for his work on flow and its effects on optimal human experience, (1990, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experi-*

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A Message from Lou & Diane:

The focus of this issue of THE LETTER is on the most recent Special Issue of American Psychologist, devoted entirely to the work of Martin Seligman and others on "Happiness, Excellence, and Optimal Human Functioning." These concepts form a powerful current emphasis of the discipline of psychology, and are closely related to our programs at The Pacific Institute. In fact, we founded The Pacific Institute at about the time the "Cognitive Revolution" began several decades ago.

The three-part title of this issue of American Psychologist – Happiness, Excellence, and Optimal Human Functioning – are terms that relate closely, in some respects, to Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory that Bandura would probably call "The Exercise of Control."

The main point we wish to make in this message to The Pacific Institute's community is that our education contains many applications of the findings of Bandura, Seligman and others in our effort to assist our clients – individuals and organizations – in their fascinating journey toward optimal human potential.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

K-6 Update

Although not directly related to this issue of THE LETTER, there will be occasions when your editor will include brief interim reports on preliminary results, or impressions of ongoing research, of significance to The Pacific Institute. Such is the case with a pilot study currently being performed at an elementary school in West Seattle.

Your editor and Theresa Cole, project director of the K-6 program, have observed a fourth grade class being administered the K-6 program, which was specifically designed for ages five through eleven. The children have convinced Theresa and myself that they were able to learn and understand the concepts we teach. This is evidenced by their ability to identify cognitive skills, and by their application of such concepts as self-talk, scotoma and goal-setting to their personal and school environments.

Further evidence is being collected, through teacher and parent interviews, to determine the impact of our education on classroom learning and general attitudes toward the school and home environments.

continued from cover

ence, New York: Harper and Row), do an excellent job of preparing the reader for the fifteen papers that follow. These papers collectively define what Seligman means by Happiness, Excellence, and Optimal Human Functioning. He predicts that a psychology that focuses on these traits will be built in the decades ahead that “achieves a scientific understanding of and effective interventions to build thriving in individuals, families and communities.” Your editor predicts that the increasing emphasis on optimal human development in psychology will result in an increase in the fund of knowledge available to us, thus enabling us to be even more effective in accomplishing our mission. This is the main reason for devoting an entire issue of THE LETTER to the content of this special, millennial issue of the *American Psychologist*.

The titles of the chapters are as follows: *The Evolution of Happiness; Individual Development in a Bio-Cultural Perspective; Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal For a National Index; The Future of Optimism; The Funds, Friends, and Faith of Happy People; Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being; Self Determination: The Tyranny of Freedom; Adaptive Mental Mechanisms: Their Role in a Positive Psychology; Psychological Resources, Positive Illusions, and*

Health; Emotional States and Physical Health; Wisdom: A Metaheuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue Toward Excellence; States of Excellence; Creativity: Cognitive, Personal, Developmental, and Social Aspects; The Origins and Ends of Giftedness; and Toward a Psychology of Positive Youth Development. All are, in important ways, domains of research and/or theory that form the basis for OPTIMAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, the central theme of our mission statement and all of our programs. It should be acknowledged that we do not use the word “happiness” frequently. However, Lou does emphasize that happiness is a highly desirable by-product of high self- and collective-efficacy, and that happiness is a state of well being that we strive to attain.

Your editor has selected for a more detailed discussion, the chapters that are central to The Pacific Institute’s programs: *Subjective Well Being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index; The Future of Optimism; Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being.*

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING:

The Science of Happiness: and a Proposal for a National Index.
—Ed Diener, *University of Illinois*

Lou often asserts in convincing terms that the over-all purpose of life is to find happiness, and that happiness is most likely to follow when we come as close as possible to reaching our God-given

potential in goal accomplishment. Subjective Well Being, SWB, is the term that some scholars use to denote happiness.

Professor Diener asserts that, “People experience abundant SWB when they experience many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains, and when they are satisfied with their lives. There are additional features of a valuable life and of mental health, but the field of SWB focuses on people’s own evaluation of their lives.”

Inglehart, R., (1990), “Culture shift in advanced industrial society,” *Princeton University Press*, proposed that “as basic material needs are met, individuals move to a post-materialistic phase in which they are concerned with self-fulfillment.” Suh, Deiner, Oishi and Triandis, 1998, researched SWB in an international sample of 7204 college students from 42 countries. Table 1 (*on page 4*) consists of the mean responses of these subjects, by country of origin, to two questions: “How often do you think about life satisfaction and happiness?” and “How important is life satisfaction, happiness and money?” A seven-point scale was used, a value of seven (7) being the most important, and one (1) the least important.

It is notable that the mean value figures for all nations in the sample are relatively high, indicating the importance of SWB on an international scale. Only 6% of all respondents rated

Table 1**Importance of Subjective Well-Being to college students**

Nation	How often do you think about?		How important is?		
	Life satisfaction	Happiness	Life satisfaction	Happiness	Money
Argentina	5.63	5.62	6.67	6.78	4.46
Australia	5.27	5.51	6.59	6.66	4.44
Bahrain	5.25	5.14	6.08	6.21	5.01
China	4.20	4.43	5.67	5.91	4.82
Germany	5.43	5.27	6.62	5.95	4.11
Greece	5.52	5.54	6.73	6.77	4.89
Hungary	5.43	5.59	6.43	6.57	4.30
India	4.74	5.20	5.75	5.97	4.81
Indonesia	5.17	5.78	6.16	6.63	4.89
Japan	4.27	4.74	6.02	6.31	4.70
Lithuania	5.31	5.38	6.18	6.62	5.23
Singapore	5.06	5.24	6.25	6.59	4.80
Slovenia	5.56	5.22	6.78	6.62	4.60
South Africa	5.53	5.75	6.44	6.61	5.00
Tanzania	4.46	4.61	5.06	5.45	5.17
Turkey	5.16	5.63	6.25	5.75	5.25
United States	5.19	5.45	6.39	6.58	4.68

money as more important than happiness, and 69% rated happiness “at the top of the importance scale.”

Although we at The Pacific Institute have not claimed specifically that our education will generate subjective well-being, we believe increased self-efficacy, which we do claim, will result in greater subjective well-being. We have abundant anecdotal data to support that belief. The Inglehart study described above is designed to explore the general concept of SWB on an international scale. Although the scale used by Suh, et. al., is one that we may consider using to measure the impact of our education, other methods of studying the origins

and effects of SWB are included in this chapter and may be of greater interest to us.

The Roles of Adaptation, Goals, and Temperament in SWB

Brickman and Campbell (1971) “Hedonic relativism and planning the good society,” and M. H. Appley (Ed) “Adaptation-level Theory” (pp.) 287-305, New York: *Academic Press*, proposed “that people are destined to hedonic neutrality in the long run. As they rise in their accomplishments and possessions, their expectations also rise. Soon they habituate to the new level and it no longer makes them happy. On the negative side, people are unhappy when they first encounter

misfortune, but they soon adapt and it no longer makes them unhappy.” Interestingly, Diener and Diener (1996) *Psychological Science*, 7, 181-185, report that “intense positive moments are rare even among the happiest individuals. Instead, happy people report mild-to-moderately pleasant emotions most of the time when alone, or with others, and when working, or at leisure. One lesson from these findings is that if people seek ecstasy much of the time, whether it be in a career or a love relationship, they are likely to be disappointed. Even worse, they may move to the next relationship or job, seeking intense levels of happiness, which in fact are rarely long lasting and are not necessary for happiness. People

need to understand that intense experiences are not the cornerstone of a happy life.”

Temperament and Happiness

Temperament has a role in happiness. Tellegen, et. al., (1988) “Personality similarity in twins reared apart and together,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 1031-1039, found that “about half the variance in current SWB in American society is due to heritability. The role of heritability is supported by research which shows that emotional reactivity emerges early in life and is moderately stable over time.” (e.g., Goldsmith, 1996). Goldsmith, H.H., “Studying temperament via construction of the Toddler Behavior Assessment Questionnaire.” *Child Development*, 67, 218-235.

The value of goals and the participation in daily life activities

Reported briefly in this section of THE LETTER are three studies, one showing the value of active life participation by Cantor N., and Sanderson, C.A., (1999). “Life task participation and well-being: The importance of taking part in daily life.” Secondly, in Kahneman, E. Diener, E. & Schwarz, N. (Eds) “Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology” New York: *Russell Sage Foundation*, and finally by Campbell A., Converse, P. E., et. al. (1976), “The quality of American life suggests that making progress toward goals contributes to SWB.” Cantor, N. and Converse, C.A. (1999) The

Pacific Institute needs effective ways to quantify our belief that we can not only increase efficacy, but by doing so, we increase our clients’ life satisfaction. As mentioned above, we have convincing anecdotal data even now that participants in our seminars report improvements in relationships at home and at work, and that overall, their attendance is frequently referred to as a “life changing” event.

THE FUTURE OF OPTIMISM:

Christopher Peterson

Peterson presents in this chapter a scholarly approach to the concept of optimism. He traces the history of research and theory on optimism, dating from Freud and his contemporaries, to Seligman and his peers. He suggests lines of needed research, and unlike many scholars, he dwells on the applicability and usefulness of the term “optimism,” which has the promise of adding to the fund of knowledge about improving happiness, excellence and optimal human functioning.

Peterson develops the following definition of optimism, which flows from the meanings given the term by those performing research in this area. “Optimism, conceptualized and assessed in a variety of ways, has been linked to positive mood and good morale; to perseverance and effective problem solving; to academic, athletic, military, occupational, and political success; to popularity, to good health, and even to long life and freedom from trauma.” Peterson furthermore contrasts optimism with pessi-

mism with the following statement: “Pessimism, in contrast, foreshadows depression, passivity, failure, social estrangement, morbidity, and mortality.” He characterizes the great interest in optimism by behavior scientists as an “optimism bandwagon.”

Early writers on optimism, e.g. Sophocles and Nietzsche, believed that optimism, according to Peterson, “prolongs human suffering: it is better to face the hard facts of reality. This negative view of positive thinking lies at the heart of Freud’s influential writings on the subject.” Others, particularly evolutionary psychologists, believe that optimism as a cognitive concept has survival value, and therefore evolves, showing the influence of Darwin. In the opinion of your editor, optimism is a cognitive concept which Seligman and his followers have shown to be related to happiness, self-regulation and performance, a formulation we find consistent with the application of Bandura’s efficacy theory. Put another way, those with high efficacy are, by definition, high in subjective well-being (happiness), optimism, and the ability to self-regulate.

Explanatory Style

Seligman, a University of Pennsylvania psychologist, became interested in the cause of depression which occurs frequently in college students. He observed a relationship between the way students explained bad events to themselves and the probability of depression. If the attribution was hopeful in nature (optimistic),

the student typically did not become depressed. If, on the other hand, they attributed the bad event to their own shortcomings (pessimistic), depression was much more likely to follow. In Peterson's words, "their causal attribution determines how they respond to the bad event. If it is a stable (long lasting) cause, helplessness is thought to be chronic. If it is a pervasive (global) cause, helplessness is thought to be widespread. If it is an internal cause, self-esteem is thought to suffer." Buchanan, G.M. and Seligman, M.E.P. (Eds). 1995. "Explanatory Style." Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

The Cultivation of Optimism

The research literature contains studies that support the importance of acquiring optimism. The Pacific Institute's programs have been shown to help increase self- and collective-efficacy, which in turn helps build confidence of individuals and groups that they can set and accomplish their individual and their organization's goals. We do this by teaching our clients how to use cognitive skills that help develop belief that they can accomplish their goals. For example, we have shown that effective self-talk strengthens beliefs, which increases efficacy and in turn leads to more effective performance levels.

Seligman and his associates have demonstrated that grade school children can be taught to be more optimistic, and in the words of Peterson, "Optimism training of this sort makes subse-

quent episodes of depression less likely." Peterson continues with the following: "I point out again that the absence of depression should not be the only outcome that interests positive social scientists. We also want to know if optimistic children end up happy and healthy, with rich social networks and rewarding pursuits." Gillham, J.E., Reivich, K.J., Jaycox, L.H., and Seligman, M.E.P. (1995). "Prevention of Depressive Symptoms in School Children: Two year follow-up," *Psychological Science*, 6, 1343-1351.

Finally, Peterson asks the very important question, "What can we do to rekindle optimism that has been thwarted?" Seligman and others have shown that the application of cognitive therapy, as developed by Aaron Beck, has been very effective in reversing depression. However, they point to the need for further research, including additional outcome measures which will provide more convincing support that cognitive therapy enriches general behavior in addition to reversing depression. Seligman, M.E.P., Castellon, C., Cacciola, J., Schulman, P., Luborsky, L., Ollove, M., and Downing, R., (1988). "Explanatory Style Change during Cognitive Therapy for Unipolar Depression." *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 97, 13-18.

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Ryan, Richard M. and Deci, Edward L. It can be said that the first chapter we reviewed here,

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING, or happiness, is the penultimate (next to the last) goal of The Pacific Institute's work with its clients. Our ultimate or final goal, as expressed in our mission statement, is to help our clients perform as close to their full potential as is possible. We also recognize that happiness, or subjective well-being can be viewed as both an antecedent to, and an important by-product of, reaching our potential, both individual and corporate.

In the second chapter reviewed herein, THE FUTURE OF OPTIMISM, we reviewed the research on the cognitive concept optimism, which Seligman and others have found to be crucial for the individual and organization striving to reach full potential. It bears mentioning again that the cognitive skills necessary for learning optimism center on the affirmation and self-talk processes. Accordingly, this chapter provides ample support for the importance of the trait of optimism in learning how to set and reach our goals.

We now turn to the third and last chapter to be reviewed, SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY. There is no more important skill than the ability to be self-driven, or more accurately, to be motivated by intrinsic rather than external sources. We measure this skill by the very important locus of control test. Bandura refers to this skill as "self-regulation," a skill vitally important to acquiring high self-efficacy.

Ryan and Deci's "Self-Determination Theory" (SDT) is an analysis of the roles of "evolved inner resources" (human agency); experience; and social environment which contribute to intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is that force, the locus of control that lies within the individual. Very young children possess intrinsic motivation, as revealed by their insatiable curiosity about the world around them. Intrinsic motivation is of crucial importance to SDT.

Happily, Ryan et. al., (1997) are not concerned with the antecedents of intrinsic motivation.

"Rather, it examines the conditions that elicit and sustain, versus subdue and diminish, this innate propensity." Ryan, R.M., Kuhl, J., and Deci, E.L., (1997). "Nature and Autonomy: Organizational view of social and neurological aspects of self-regulation in behavior and development." *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 701-728.

Factors affecting intrinsic motivation, (or internal locus of control):

1. Supportive rather than negative feedback regarding performance reinforces feelings of competence. Vallerand, R.J., & Reid, G., (1984) "On the causal effects of perceived competence on intrinsic motivation: A test of cognitive evaluation theory." *Journal of Sport Psychology*, 6, 94-102.

2. Feelings of competence will not take place unless there is a *feeling of causality* on the part of the individual. In other words, there must be a *belief* that the locus of control for performance lies within, that it is *self-determined*. Fisher, C.D. (1978) "The effects of personal control, competence, and extrinsic reward systems on intrinsic motivation." *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*. 21, 273-288.

3. The research literature is somewhat equivocal on the effect of a tangible or external reward on the strength of intrinsic motivation. Deci, Koestner, & Ryan recently found that "all expected tangible rewards made contingent on task performance do reliably undermine intrinsic motivation." Deci, E.L. Koestner, R., & Ryan, R.M., (1999) "A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation."

Psychological Bulletin, 125, 627-668. Your editor is compelled to report that in a study done by the editor of the effects of tangible rewards on learning of middle- and lower-class children, it was found that middle class children needed no extrinsic reward

to learn tasks, while lower class children did. Apparently, middle class children have learned autonomy through the child-rearing practices of their parents, while lower class children, in general, have experienced child-rearing practices based more on control. It should be added that this study was completed many years ago, while the Deci, et. al. research, a meta-analysis, is more comprehensive than the single study. The latter is more recent also.

4. Threats and imposed goals diminish intrinsic motivation, while procedures that emphasize autonomy and learner participation encourage intrinsic motivation. Deci, E.L. & Ryan, R.M. (1985). "Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior." New York: *Plenum*.
5. Maternal and teacher autonomy support predicts more exploratory behavior and therefore more intrinsic motivation than maternal and teacher non-autonomy support.

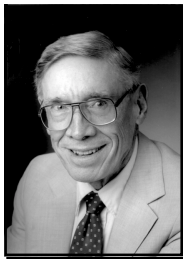
SUMMARY

This millennial issue of *American Psychologist* reviewed here is replete with theory and research that supports Seligman and his co-editor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's proposal for a rather dramatic change in emphasis for the discipline of psychology. Seligman has more than hinted in recent years that it is time to change to a psychology that emphasizes the "up-side" of human behavior. We have, over the past one hundred years, made significant progress with the "down-side," i.e. the weaknesses, frailties and vulnerabilities of people, and we have developed treatments for

disorders that have developed as a result of the weaknesses. Seligman argues very effectively that it is high time we turn our attention to the many assets, talents and strengths of people.

Seligman's case is a very strong one. Furthermore, we are in the "Decade of Behavior," declared so by the American Psychological Association's Board of Directors. Your editor believes that this decade will mark a turning point in the history of the development of psychology as an intellectual discipline. Psychology will be lead by cognitive theorists like Bandura,

Seligman and their devotees in an effort to better understand how the mind works in the development of enormous human talent and potential, much of which is now going to waste. Every article in the millennial issue of *American Psychologist* provides background theory and research important to those interested in developing human potential. Each article addresses issues and concepts we stress in our education – happiness, self-determination, optimism, excellence in performance.



Dr. Glenn Terrell earned his B.A. in Political Science from Davidson College, his M.S. in Psychology from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Terrell served as Chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and as Dean of Faculties at the University of Illinois in Chicago before an 18-year tenure as President of Washington State University. He also served as President of the National Association of State Universities and Colleges, Commissioner for the State of Washington on the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, served on the Board for General Telephone Northwest and West for 23 years, was a Fellow for the Society for Research in Child Development, and a Fellow for the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Terrell has received numerous honorary degrees and awards, among them a listing in Who's Who in America: American Men of Science, and Distinguished Graduate of the Department of Psychology, University of Iowa. He has managed multimillion dollar technology transfers and faculty and student exchange programs throughout the world.

Christy Watson is Director of Marketing for The Pacific Institute, as well as acting as Associate Editor for The LETTER. In addition to her marketing responsibilities, Christy has played the editor's role in the creation and updating of many Institute programs. A Seattle native, Christy received her B.A. from the University of Washington.