

Comfort Queh
Eng 100
Formal Assignment #2: Research Project
November 26, 2018

Introduction: My Entry into Three Good Things

I believe within my heart we all have a person that we enjoy speaking too more than once a day. If you don't believe me, pull out your phone and go through your recent calls history. As you scroll through each name on your list, ask yourself the question "do I enjoy speaking to this person?". When you've got your answer, count how many times their name appears in your history for the day? If you're lucky, you may have more than one, but as for me, I may not be as lucky, however, I am grateful to have that one person, who happens to be my cousin, Garley.

We talk on the phone more than three times during the day. We talk so often that it's just ordinary to us. If we were to go the entire day with just one phone call to each other, most likely a "hello" wouldn't be the greeting that follows when we get on the phone. It would most likely be "you haven't call me ALL day," A month ago if I was to ask myself the same question, I would have cold heartily, without any doubts agree with it but a month ago I didn't realize that I was taking it for granted until the "Three Good Things" challenge.

For seven days starting at the end of October towards the beginning of November, I participated in a research assignment title "Three Good Things." The "Three Good Things" is an activity that encourages you to focus on the positive things that are happening in your day to day routines by writing down three things that you are grateful for every day for a week. By focusing on the positive, which it forces you to do, the person is able to improve their well-being; so for six days (since I missed one day), I embarked on this journey. Toward the end of every night, I

sat down for ten minutes and documented three things, big or small, that I was grateful that happened to me during the day.

During one of the days while documenting in my journey, it was a rough day. I needed to talk. So picking up my phone, I click on my call history list, and without no doubt the name “Garley” was the name that was showed up more than once, after one ring she answered. That same night as I was writing down my “Three Good Things,” I didn’t hesitate to write down that I was grateful for my cousin. It was this realization and many more as I look back throughout my experience that dawn on me to come to the conclusion that when taking the time to truly partake in the “Three Good Thing” gratitude activity, it can truly have a positive impact on your well-being.

Literature Review

To have a better understanding of the “Three Good Things” we must first have the same understanding of positive psychology, well-being, and gratitude. To begin, let’s first break down positive psychology.

According to Martin Seligman, whom is often known as the founder of positive psychology; positive psychology is a science of what makes life worth living (Seligman, 2004). Seligman findings on positive psychology emphasizes that the three main goals of this practice are: “being concerned with human strength just as much as their weakness, being able to build on their strength while also repairing the weakness” within an individual, and it positive psychology “should be just as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling” and if you happen to be a genius then the focus would be on “nurturing” that person “high talent” (Seligman, 2004). Unlike, the field of psychology 60 years ago, which main focus was the

“disease model,” its’ only focused was finding the illness, testing the illness, diagnosing the illness, and treating the illness (Seligman, 2004). Which Seligman, agrees that was a huge improvement but the disagreement is that, the field of psychology 60 years ago lack the ability to make people happier because it was solely focused on the negatives of humans and not at all on the positive (Seligman, 2004).” It lacked “positive intervention” so that’s why Seligman idea of positive psychology emerged, to help individuals well-being.

One of the focuses of positive psychology is the well- being of human beings. According Teresa Del Pilar Rojas, well-being is an “individuals experience of affective reactions and cognitive judgments” (Rojas, 2016). Seligman illustrates the concept of well-being in five measurable element called PERMA; which stands for Positive Emotion (feeling good, optimism, pleasure and enjoyment), Engagement (fulfilling work interests and hobbies, “flow”), Relationship (social connections, love, physical interaction and intimacy), Meaning (having a purpose, finding meaning in life), and Accomplishment (ambitions, and realistic goals) (Ackerman & Pennock, 2018).

Each factors of PERMA plays a role into human flourishing and being that it’s measurable individually, each person can cultivate different techniques to increase their well-being when focusing on the five areas (Ackerman & Pennock, 2018). PERMA is a building block that helps aligned people with their values and interests to enable a flourishing life by what is meaningful to each individuals and which route they may choose to journey on (Ackerman & Pennock, 2018).

One techniques that people can use cultivate into their everyday life to increase their well-being is by practicing gratitude. To understand my purpose going forward, I will be using professors of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine, Dr. Randy A. Sansone and Medicine Physician

Lori A. Sansone, whom defines gratitude as “the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself and represents a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation” (Sansone, 2010).

There is many research that suggest that cultivating gratitude into your life improves well-being. In a 2003 gratitude-focused study conducted by Robert A. Emmons and Michael E McCollough, showed that “gratitude-focused participant exhibited increased well-being and concluded that a conscious focus on blessing may have emotional interpersonal benefits” (Brandt, 2018). According to Andrea Brandt, having gratitude stimulates two important parts of the brain, the hypothalamus which regulates stress and the ventral tegmental area which is responsible for producing pleasure (Brandt).

Another gratitude study that is recommending and conducted by Seligman to improve well-being by making people happier and less depressed is the “Gratitude Visit” (Seligman, 2004). In this exercise, individual are asked to write a 300-word testimonial to one person that has impacted their life and then visit the person to read what they have written (Seligman, 2004).

Another research base study that helps cultivate gratitude into your life and improves your well-being is the “Three Good Things” exercise, which I had the pleasure to experience.

Findings

I will now explore my findings and views of the “Three Good Things” exercise. As I explained above, every day for six days, I timed myself for 10 minutes and wrote three things into my journal every night before heading to bed. The first day I completed my journal it seemed really simply and easy to write down things I was grateful for, so I felt as if I really didn’t need the exercise. Although, I felt like that, I still continued on. Fast forwarded to couple of days, since I was going through some personal struggles I wasn’t as excited to take 10 minutes

out of my day to sit and write in my journal; the idea just seemed a bit irritating to me because I knew that I was grateful simply because I felt it; for me that was enough but I still continued on with the exercise because I was curious to see what would happen at the end of the seven day even though I would miss a day.

However, on the fifth day of the exercise, it was a really “shitty day” and I don’t say that too often, but I needed to talk to somebody, as I explained above, that day I called my cousin Garley, like I usually do when I just want to talk and like most days she was there to answer my call. We spoke for a while on the phone, even though I was crying most of the time. However, that night when I was writing in my journal, I didn’t hesitate to write down what I was grateful for her, because like I said before, it something that comes naturally to me. However, as I wrote that night, it dawned on me that while in the moment, I had taken the phone and many phones that I shared with my cousin for granted. I realized that night, that in the moment of crying and sharing how I was feeling about the struggles I was going through, I was only focus on what I was going through. I realized that my “shitty day” had become a bunch of noise that I was hearing, so much that I got consumed with it. That night when I was writing down about being grateful for my cousin I realized that if I was not going to be partaking in the “Three Good Things” exercise I wasn’t going to be vigilant of this behavior.

I realized that my behavior was that the things I was grateful for was background noises in my daily life, and although I feel that I was living in the moment, I really wasn’t the moment was instead living me. I was living in the noise of my struggles and it was effecting my well-being unnoticeable. In hence, I believe that the “Three Good Things” help change my perspective in a more positive way. I have come to the conclusion that thing that I am grateful

needs to be a consistent voice in my ears and not just background noises. A lot of times we get so consumed in our routines that we forget to just live in our individual appreciation of life.

To better understand how I was feeling and how I could relate it to Seligman's science of positive psychology, I went back to Seligman's theory of PERMA while going through to my "Three Good Things" journal. Based on my individual measure of the different factors of PERMA, most of the things I was grateful for fell in the positive emotion, relationships, and accomplishment categories. It made me realize that I need to increase my engagement and meaning categories to improve my well-being. With that being said, I am in the looks of research exercise that can help me improve in this area.

Conclusion

Although some may read this and feel that the "Three Good Things" is not their cup of tea, or some may try it and get a different result; However, I say to them, that there are many other research-based exercises to cultivate gratitude into your life and the "Three Good Things" doesn't have to be your journey, but it is worth trying. Although my life has not change drastically; however, my perspective has shifted in a more positive way. I've realized that I need to live in the moment more, and for me that's enjoying that hugs that I give to a family or friend, and maybe even a stranger in need of one. It's also me realizing that smile on my face when my cousins take the time of her day to chat with me. For me that a great deal of meaning in my every life. The "Three Good Thing" has been a true eye-opening process but I want to find other research exercise that can help me improve in other meaningful area of my life, but if I do find myself slipping back to my old way, I will always have the "Three Good Things" process to come back too.

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