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ENG 100

Formal Assignment #2: Research Project

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### Three Good Things Research Project

#### **INTRODUCTION: My entry into Three Good Things**

Your dreams came true. You have a beautiful house. You have beautiful cars. You have gotten yourself a job that pays quite well. You're a success. However, even with all of these, you still don't feel happy. Why is that? Is there something wrong with you? Well no, not quite. There are studies that show that there is nothing wrong with you. Dr. Martin Seligman developed a process to improve your well-being. He defines well being as the acronym P.E.R.M.A, which stands for positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaningfulness, and accomplishment. The process is called "three good things." This process is easy to follow. You have to write down three good things that happened during the day each day for one week. I tried this process myself. For seven days I wrote down three good things. Does this process work? Can the "three good things process" have a positive impact on someone's well being? For me, the "three good things" gratitude process did have a positive impact on my well-being, because when I looked back at my journal, it raised my level of gratitude for my family.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The word psychology used to have a sad reputation to it. Whenever people heard it, they thought of mental illness, sickness, and insanity. Martin Seligman wanted to change this. He wanted to focus on the good things of psychology. He became the founder of positive psychology. Positive psychology is focused on the strengths instead of weaknesses ( Peterson 2008).

Martin Seligman's positive psychology focused on well-being. One might say that the definition of well-being is the state of being happy. Martin Seligman had a different idea in mind. To define well-being he came up with the acronym known as P.E.R.M.A. This acronym stands for Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaningfulness, Accomplishments. ([positivepsychologyprogram.com](http://positivepsychologyprogram.com)).

Positive emotions are the things in life that make you feel happy. Engagement is how you interact with the things around you. Relationships is how you interact with the people around you. The things in life that have an impact on you are the things that make your life meaningful. Finally, accomplishments are the goals in your life. This includes getting a good grade on your test, getting a job, winning a trophy, meeting a deadline and more ([positivepsychologyprogram.com](http://positivepsychologyprogram.com)).

Most people will never stop being hungry for more. There will always be more. You get a 100 thousand dollars, now you want a million dollars. You get a million dollars, now you want a billion. You get an apartment, now you want a house, you get a house, now you want a mansion. A person can't reach well-being with this type of mentality. You have to stop and appreciate the things you already have in life. This is

known as gratitude. “Grateful people experience more joy, love, and enthusiasm, and they enjoy protection from destructive emotions like envy, greed, and bitterness”(yale.edu). A recent experiment was conducted that used three groups. The experiment showed that Compared with the participants who wrote about negative experiences or only received counseling, those who wrote gratitude letters reported significantly better mental health four weeks and 12 weeks after their writing exercise ended“(Wong,Brown). This quote shows that gratitude can improve well-being. There are many ways to practice gratitude. One of the more popular ways is what's known as the “three good things” gratitude process.

The “three good things” gratitude process is meant to have a positive impact on your well-being. The way it works is simple. The process itself takes place over the course of seven days. What you have to do is write down three good things that happened to you and that you are grateful for each day. It is important that you write them down on paper instead of thinking about it in your head. After you do this for seven days, your well-being should be positively impacted (GGIA.berkeley.edu).

If you have tried this process and haven't seen good results, do not feel bad. There is research that shows that gratitude might not work for some people. Don Davis is a psychologist at Georgia State University. He looked at random experiments designed to make people feel more grateful (npr.org) He found that there is weak evidence for the efficacy of gratitude interventions. He included

It's also possible that gratitude isn't always the best emotion to have in every circumstance — say, if someone were in an abusive relationship, or in some other situation that required urgent action to change (Davis).

## FINDINGS

In this section I will write about what I found in my experiment. As I previously stated, the process is writing down three good things that happen to you each day for seven days. So I did. I made a journal, and for seven days I wrote down three good things that happened to me. It was a new experience. I found that while writing I started to feel appreciative. It put me in a good mood. However, while it did put me in a good mood, it didn't last that long. After 10 or 20 minutes I went back to my usual ways. Because of that I decided the process didn't work and so I stopped doing it once the assignment was complete.

A few days after the assignment however, I decided to go back into my journal. I did this to see whether there were any themes. Some of the things I wrote down include

- I played Tennis with my dad in the morning. We hadn't played in a while.
- My brother lives in North Carolina. Today he said he's thinking about coming to Philadelphia for Thanksgiving.
- On Thursdays my dad picks me up from school. I'm grateful because usually I have to take two buses.
- When I was playing with my brother online, I thought of how fortunate I was to be able to have access to internet at home.
- My brother said he was getting a new tv. This made me happy for him.
- I'm grateful that I can sit down and watch a soccer game with my dad.
- My dad made spaghetti for lunch and it was really good.

- My mom was taking a walk outside. On the phone she chuckled while telling me to go pick up the laundry from the dryer. I'm glad I made sure that it was my family's laundry this time.
- Today my family and I went to Costco. As always, I was thankful that they had free food samples.

The theme that I noticed is family. I noticed that my family was in over half of my journal. This made me realise a couple of things. It made me realise that my family is a big part of my life. It made me realise how much I have been taking them for granted. If it wasn't for my parents I wouldn't be in America. They sacrificed their good jobs in Albania for me to have a better life in America. Just recently, my mom said that her job was offering scholarships. I'm also thankful for my older brother. When he was seven he wanted to have a little brother. This made me so grateful to be a part of my family, and that makes me feel good. It didn't work when I was writing the good things down. It worked when I went back to look at the things I wrote. That is how the three good things process had a positive impact on my life.

## **CONCLUSION**

As a result of following this process I felt a much greater sense of appreciation for my family. Because of this I will continue to follow the process. My main takeaway is that writing is a big part of the process. If I hadn't written the three good things down, I wouldn't have had anything to go back to. Another takeaway is that this process is not for everyone. Like previously stated, not everyone can experience gratitude the same way. Some people might achieve well-being in other manners. There are a few questions to consider. The first is:

Would increasing the time from seven days to four weeks make a better difference? For some people, seven days is not enough, and they might need more time. Another is: Would doing the process once a week instead of everyday be more effective?, and the last one is: Would it be better to take a break from the writing and look at what you wrote. That is how the process personally affected me. Those were my views on the “three good things” gratitude process.

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