

Taylor Dannaker

English 100

Formal Assignment 2: Research Project

Draft #2

My Gratitude Process

Introduction: My Entry into Three Good Things

It's barely dark when the doorbell rings. My niece, Harper, runs into my arms gasping in excitement. We peep out the front door window to see little kids dressed up in costumes. I grab the candy bowl as we exit outside to hand out the candy. "Trick-or-Treat" says the young girl dressed as a princess. Harper grabs some candy, not saying a word, as she slowly dropped the candy into the kids halloween bags. "Thank you" the kids say to us as they exit down the driveway. "Come on, let's go get your halloween costume on." I tell Harper. She insists that we stay outside. All she wanted to do was hand out the Halloween candy. "Let's go" as I try to bribe her into the house with some candy.

I grab her little ladybug costume and begin to dress her. The weather was beautiful with a little breeze, so I knew I wouldn't have to layer her up. As more and more kids came up to the house, my mom went outside to sit and hand out the candy. When Harper was finished getting dressed, I guided her back outside, making sure to have her Halloween basket.

I scooped up Harper as we made our way to the neighbors house. She then realized that she was now receiving candy, she loved it. After visiting some of the houses in the neighborhood, we began our short walk back to my mom's house which landed us right where we started, handing out Halloween candy.

During this night, I spent Halloween with my mom and niece which turned out to be a night filled with happiness. I later asked myself, “can the ‘three good things’ gratitude process have a positive impact on my well being? The “three good things” gratitude process did not improve my well-being in the week of writing the journal. But, after completing the PERMA model, my well-being did improve because the model helped me appreciate relationships and made me grateful in the moment.

Literature Review

Before starting this project, I asked myself, “What is positive psychology.” As I was researching, I came across a name: Martin Seligman. Seligman is the founder of positive psychology. Positive psychology can be defined as “the scientific study of what makes life worth living” (Peterson). Courtney Ackerman states that “positive psychology focuses on the positive events and influences in life, including positive experiences, positive states and traits, and positive institutions.” These elements are key to helping improve people’s well-being and to live their best lives.

Well-being is more complex to describe. As I researched, I got many different components for the definition of well-being. Stephen Joseph believes that there are 14 components that complete the definition of well-being. Joseph states the components are happiness, optimism, acceptance, self-worth, and purpose are some of them. As you evaluate the 14 components of well-being, you will most likely have gaps. Using these terms, you can then improve your well-being by recognizing what you are missing and making changes to incorporate them.

What is gratitude? “Gratitude is the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself and represents a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation” (Sansone & Sansone). Gratitude is very important to appreciate and be thankful towards others or for yourself and your accomplishments.

Gratitude improves well-being as Grant Brenner states, “...people use gratitude automatically, generating a state of mind which buffers negative events and stressful responses to sustain greater overall well-being.” I think it’s hard to recognize if gratitude is affecting your well-being if you don’t know exactly what those terms mean.

Over the course of a week, I tested out the process of “three good things”. The “three good things” gratitude process is when you write down three positive moments during your day for a week and see at the end if it improves your well being.

Does gratitude really improve your well-being? Marie Forleo talks in her video if you do not write down positive moments throughout your day, then you are doing yourself a disservice. Gratitude cannot improve well being if you do not handle it properly.

The PERMA model supports how gratitude improves well-being. Dr. Seligman defines PERMA as “well-being has five measurable elements (PERMA) that count toward it: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.” I believe in this model and that the outcome of using PERMA is substantial.

Findings

In this section, I will prove the “three good things” process did not improve my well-being in the week of writing the journal. But, after completing the PERMA model, did improve my well-being. The PERMA model did improve my well-being because the model

helped me appreciate family and relationships while being more grateful in the moments spent with them.

As night time approached, I had no desire to sit down and write in my “three good things” gratitude journal. I found it as a chore and something I had to do. After the week was over, I went to class and was introduced to the PERMA model. After evaluating my 21 gratitude journal entries, I had come to the conclusion that the gratitude process did have a positive outcome on my well-being. The “three good things” process works by focusing and remembering positive events and moments. Also by recognizing and reminiscing on the positivity in your life leading to a mindset of gratitude (Greater Good In Action).

In my journal when I applied the PERMA model, I discovered that positive moments and relationships outshined the other categories. Using the PERMA model really helped me gain appreciation for the positivity throughout my days.

Wednesday, October 31

1. My mom made us dinner: She made my favorite pasta dinner and it was amazing.
2. Did my brother’s halloween makeup: My brother and his friends were hobos so I drew a fake beard on him and he looked best out of all of his friends.
3. Took my niece Trick-or-Treating: The weather was beautiful and she loved giving out halloween candy to the other trick-or-treaters. We walked around the neighborhood for about 30 minutes and she was as happy as could be.

Here I listed a day in my gratitude journal. Just reading over the positive moments makes me overall happier and helps me focus on the positives rather than the negatives. During these

moments in my “three good things” journal, I was able to reread them applying the PERMA model and savoring those moments filled with gratefulness.

This journal entry is filled with relationships and positivity. According to Bronwyn Robertson, “Having positive, supportive relationships can prevent illness by boosting the immune system, lowering blood pressure and reducing stress levels.” During these days in my journal when I look back on them, they were very stress free. The supporting relationships I wrote about helped me gain gratefulness towards them with the help of the PERMA model.

Without the PERMA model, I don’t believe that the “three good things” gratitude process would have benefited me or improved my well-being.

Conclusion

During Halloween, I experienced a night where I focused on the positivity of my personal relationships. Writing this moment in my gratitude journal allowed me to realize that I am less stressed when I am with my family. Relationships are really important to me and the PERMA model helped me understand that. I am now more grateful towards my family and for the relationships I have with them. Overall, I do believe the “three good things” gratitude process helped me after I completed the PERMA exercise. Without PERMA, I think I’d be writing a completely different paper right now.

For the future, I’m not going to continue with the “three good things” gratitude process. I believe it was a good effort testing it out for a week but it is just not my choice of process. I believe working on this paper and focusing on my gratitude journal that I have gained enough appreciation and gratefulness which is what I needed.

Works Cited

- Ackerman, Courtney. "What Is Positive Psychology & Why Is It Important? Definition + Examples." *Positive Psychology Program - Your One-Stop PP Resource!*, 23 Aug. 2018, positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-psychology-definition/.
- Brenner, Grant Hilary. "How Does Spontaneous Gratitude Increase Daily Well-Being?" *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, 22 Mar. 2018, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/experimentations/201803/how-does-spontaneous-gratitude-increase-daily-well-being.
- Forleo, Marie. "The Downside Of Gratitude." *About Marie Forleo, Founder of MarieTV & B-School*, 14 Dec. 2016, www.marieforleo.com/2012/11/downside-gratitude/.
- Joseph, Stephen. "What Exactly Is Well-Being?" *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, 21 Aug. 2017, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-doesnt-kill-us/201708/what-exactly-is-well-being.
- Robertson, Bronwyn. "Healthy Relationships Are Essential to Well-Being." *The Health Journal*, 28 June 2016, www.thehealthjournals.com/healthy-relationships-are-essential-to-well-being/.
- Seligman, Martin. "Authentic Happiness." *University of Pennsylvania*, Apr. 2011, www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/learn/wellbeing.
- "Three Good Things (Greater Good in Action)." *Practice | Greater Good in Action*, 2018, ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/three-good-things#data-tab-why.

“What Is Gratitude and What Is Its Role in Positive Psychology?” *Positive Psychology*

Program - Your One-Stop PP Resource!, 28 Feb. 2017,

positivepsychologyprogram.com/gratitude-appreciation/.