

DJP3D : POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

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TEXT BOOKS

1. Snyder, C. R., Lopez, S. J., & Pedrotti, J. T. (2010). Positive Psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths. 2nd ed. Sage Publications, India.
2. Baumgardner, S. R., & Crothers, M. K. (2009). Positive Psychology. Pearson Education, India.

UNIT I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition

In today's world, society is facing extremely tough challenges in the form of global warming, natural disasters, economic recession, unprecedented homelessness, terrorism and the draining continuation of war. With all this sadness and horror, where in the world does a science based on testing happiness, wellbeing, personal growth and 'the good life' fit into the modern-day agenda?

Psychology after World War II became a science largely devoted to healing. It concentrated on repairing damage using a disease model of human functioning. This almost exclusive attention to pathology neglected the idea of a fulfilled individual and a thriving community, and it neglected the possibility that building strength is the most potent weapon in the arsenal of therapy.

Positive psychology focuses on wellbeing, happiness, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, imagination and characteristics of positive groups and institutions. Furthermore, the focus is not just on how to make individuals happy, thereby perpetuating a selfcentred, narcissistic approach, but on happiness and flourishing at a group level as well. Positive Psychology looks at how individuals and groups thrive and how increasing the wellbeing of one will have a positive effect on the other, leading to a win-win situation.

Positive psychology is not simply the focus on positive thinking and positive emotions. It's much more than that. Indeed, the area of positive psychology is focused on what makes individuals and communities flourish, rather than languish. Flourishing is defined as 'a state of positive mental health; to thrive, to prosper and to fare well in endeavors free of mental illness, filled with emotional vitality and function positively in private and social realms.'

According to positive psychologists, for most of its life mainstream psychology (sometimes also referred to as 'psychology as usual') has been concerned with the negative aspects of human life. There have been pockets of interest in topics such as creativity, optimism and wisdom, but these have not been united by any grand theory or a broad, overarching framework. This rather negative state of affairs was not the original intention of the first psychologists, but came about through a historical accident. Prior to the Second World War, psychology had three tasks, which were to: cure mental illness, improve normal lives and

identify and nurture high talent. However, after the war the last two tasks somehow got lost, leaving the field to concentrate predominantly on the first one.

How did that happen? Given that psychology as a science depends heavily on the funding of governmental bodies, it is not hard to guess what happened to the resources after World War II. Understandably, facing a human crisis on such an enormous scale, all available resources were poured into learning about and the treatment of psychological illness and psychopathology.

This is how psychology as a field learnt to operate within a *disease model*. This model has proven very useful. Seligman highlights the victories of the disease model, which are, for example, that 14 previously incurable mental illnesses (such as depression, personality disorder, or anxiety attacks) can now be successfully treated. However, the costs of adopting this disease model included the negative view of psychologists as ‘victimologists’ and ‘pathologisers’, the failure to address the improvement of normal lives and the identification and nurturance of high talent. Just to illustrate, if you were to say to your friends that you were going to see a psychologist, what is the most likely response that you would get? ‘What’s wrong with you?’ How likely are you to hear something along the lines of: ‘Great! Are you planning to concentrate on selfimprovement?’

Many psychologists admit that we have little knowledge of what makes life worth living or of how normal people flourish under usual, rather than extreme, conditions. In fact, we often have little more to say about the good life than selfhelp gurus. But shouldn’t we know better? The Western world has long overgrown the rationale for an exclusively disease model of psychology. Perhaps now is the time to readdress the balance by using psychology resources to learn about normal and flourishing lives, rather than lives that are in need of help. Perhaps now is the time to gather knowledge about strengths and talents, high achievement (in every sense of this word), the best ways and means of selfimprovement, fulfilling work and relationships, and a great art of ordinary living carried out in every corner of the planet. This is the rationale behind the creation of positive psychology.

However, positive psychology is still nothing else but psychology, adopting the same scientific method. It simply studies different (and often far more interesting) topics and asks slightly different questions, such as ‘what works?’ rather than ‘what doesn’t?’ or ‘what is right with this person?’ rather than ‘what is wrong?’

1.2 Assumptions and Goals

The aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life. To redress the previous imbalance, we must bring the building of strength to the forefront in the treatment and prevention of mental illness. The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future—optimism, hope, and faith.

At the individual level it is about positive personal traits—the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

Positive psychology concentrates on positive experiences at three time points: (1) the past, centring on wellbeing, contentment and satisfaction; (2) the present, which focuses on concepts such as happiness and flow experiences; (3) the future, with concepts including optimism and hope. Not only does positive psychology distinguish between wellbeing across time points but it also separates the subject area into three nodes:

- the subjective node, which encompasses things like positive experiences and states across past, present and future (for example, happiness, optimism, wellbeing);
- the individual node, which focuses on characteristics of the ‘good person’ (for example, talent, wisdom, love, courage, creativity); and
- the group node, which studies positive institutions, citizenship and communities (for example, altruism, tolerance, work ethic)

1.3 From the negative to the positive

Before World War II, psychology had three distinct missions: curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent. Right after the war, two events— both economic—changed the face of psychology. In 1946, the

Veterans Administration was founded, and thousands of psychologists found out that they could make a living treating mental illness. At that time the profession of clinical psychologist came into its own. In 1947, the National Institute of Mental Health (which was based on the American Psychiatric Association's disease model and is better described as the National Institute of Mental Illness) was founded, and academics found out that they could get grants if their research was described as being about pathology.

This arrangement brought many substantial benefits. There have been huge strides in the understanding of and therapy for mental illness: At least 14 disorders, previously intractable, have yielded their secrets to science and can now be either cured or considerably relieved. But the downside was that the other two fundamental missions of psychology—making the lives of all people better and nurturing genius—were all but forgotten. It was not only the subject matter that altered with funding but also the currency of the theories underpinning how we viewed ourselves. Psychology came to see itself as a mere subfield of the health professions, and it became a Victimology. We saw human beings as passive foci: stimuli came on and elicited responses (what an extraordinarily passive word). External reinforcements weakened or strengthened responses, or drives, tissue needs, or instincts. Conflicts from childhood pushed each of us around.

Psychology's empirical focus then shifted to assessing and curing individual suffering. There has been an explosion in research on psychological disorders and the negative effects of environmental stressors such as parental divorce, death, and physical and sexual abuse. Practitioners went about treating mental illness within the disease-patient framework of repairing damage: damaged habits, damaged drives, damaged childhood, and damaged brains. The message of the positive psychology movement is to remind our field that it has been deformed. Psychology is not just the study of disease, weakness, and damage; it also is the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong; it also is building what is right. Psychology is not just about illness or health; it also is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play. And in this quest for what is best, positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, self-deception, or hand waving; instead, it tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behavior presents in all its complexity.

Thus, positive psychology is not a selfish psychology. At its best, positive psychology has been able to give the scientific community, society and individuals a new perspective on existing

ideas as well as providing empirical evidence to support the phenomenon of human flourishing. Above all, though, positive psychology has challenged and rebalanced the deficit approach to living while connecting its findings to many different disciplines.

1.4 View of human functioning

What foregrounds this approach is the issue of prevention. In the last decade psychologists have become concerned with prevention, and this was the theme of the 1998 American Psychological Association meeting in San Francisco.

How can we prevent problems like depression or substance abuse or schizophrenia in young people who are genetically vulnerable or who live in worlds that nurture these problems? How can we prevent murderous schoolyard violence in children who have poor parental supervision, a mean streak, and access to weapons? What we have learned over 50 years is that the disease model does not move us closer to the prevention of these serious problems. Indeed, the major strides in prevention have largely come from a perspective focused on systematically building competency, not correcting weakness. We have discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness: courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance, the capacity for flow and insight, to name several. Much of the task of prevention in this new century will be to create a science of human strength whose mission will be to understand and learn how to foster these virtues in young people.

1.5 Eastern and western perspectives

Positive psychology places a lot of emphasis on being a new and forward thinking discipline. Whilst the second claim might be true, the idea as such is hardly new. The roots of positive psychology can be traced to the thoughts of ancient Greek philosophers. Aristotle believed that there was a unique *daimon*, or spirit within each individual, that guides us to pursue things that are right for us. Acting in accordance with this daimon leads one to happiness. The question of happiness has since been picked up by hundreds, if not thousands, of prominent thinkers, and gave rise to many theories, including Hedonism, with its emphasis on pleasure and Utilitarianism, seeking the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

In the 20th century, many prominent psychologists focused on what later became the subject matter of positive psychology. Amongst them were Carl Jung with his individuation, or ‘becoming all that one can be’ concept, Maria Jahoda, concerned with defining positive mental health and Gordon Allport, interested in individual maturity. Since then, the matters of flourishing and wellbeing were raised in the work on prevention and wellness enhancement. The most notable of positive psychology’s predecessors, however, was the humanistic psychology movement, which originated in the 1950s and reached its peak in the 60s and 70s. This movement placed central emphasis on the growth and authentic self of an individual.

Humanistic psychologists were critical of pathology oriented approaches to a human being. The most famous ones were Carl Rogers, who introduced the concept of the fully functioning person, and Abraham Maslow, who emphasised self-actualisation. In fact it was Maslow who was the very first to use the term positive psychology. Humanistic psychologists, however, did not only reject the dominant negative paradigm of psychology, they also believed that so called ‘scientific method’ (good for studying molecules and atoms) helps little in understanding the human being in its complexity and called for more qualitative rather than quantitative (statistical, number crunching) research. This is where positive psychology believes that humanistic psychology, because of its scepticism of an empirical method, is not very grounded scientifically. Contrary to the humanists, whilst rejecting the mainstream psychology preoccupation with negative topics, positive psychology embraces the dominant scientific paradigm. Positive psychology thus distinguishes itself from humanistic psychology on the basis of methods, whereas the substance and the topics studied are remarkably similar. Rightly or wrongly, positive psychology tends to present itself as a new movement, often attempting to distance itself from its origins.

1.5.1 The Western Perspective

Athenian

The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle discussed virtues and human strengths. Aristotle details 11 moral virtues: courage, moderation, generosity, munificence, magnificence, even temper, friendliness, truthfulness, wit, justice and friendship. In addition to these, he also describes intellectual virtues (mainly involving wisdom) and believed that “strength of character

as inculcated by the political community would lead to enduring human excellence” (Solomon, 2006). Aristotle also believed that the government should take the responsibility of the development of virtue in the society through early education.

Judeo-Christianity

The Bible contains discussion of virtues in many chapters and verses. In the Old Testament, the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are highlighted. These were later discussed as part of the “Seven Heavenly Virtues” by Thomas Aquinas. According to historians, Aquinas lists these virtues as fortitude, justice, temperance and wisdom (often called the cardinal virtues; Peterson and Seligman, 2004), faith, hope, and charity (Williams & Houck, 1982). Similarly other scholars also cite the Ten Commandments given by Moses in the Old Testament as directives for cultivating certain strengths within the Jewish tradition. Throughout the New Testament other mentions are made of virtues and strengths. For instance, in the Book of Proverbs, there are many mentions of virtuous behavior (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

1.5.2 The Eastern perspective

Confucianism

Confucius or the Sage stated that leadership and education are central to morality. He emphasized morality as the cure for evils. The teachings are quite similar to those laid down by Aristotle and Plato regarding the responsibility of the leaders. Attaining virtue lies at the core of Confucian teachings. Five main virtues laid down are: jen (humanity), yi (duty to treat others well), li (etiquette and sensitivity for others’ feelings), zhi (wisdom) and xin (truthfulness).

Taoism

Lao-Tzu, the creator of the Taoist tradition) states that his followers must live according to the Tao (“the way”). Tao is the energy that surrounds everyone and is a power that “envelops, surrounds and flows through all things” (Western Reform Taoism, 2003). Understanding will flow from experiencing the way for oneself by fully participating in life. Hence, experiencing both good and bad events can lead to a greater understanding of the way. According to the Taoist philosophy, the most important goal is spontaneity and naturalness.

Buddhism

Throughout the teachings of the Buddha, the good of others is emphasized. Buddha also teaches that suffering is a part of being and that this suffering is brought on by desire. Nirvana is considered the state in which the self is freed from any kind of desire. Both premortal and postmortal states are proposed. Buddhism gives a very important place to virtues, Brahma Viharas (virtues above all others in importance, called as universal virtues by Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These virtues include love (maitri), compassion (karuna), joy (mudita), and equanimity (upeksha) (Sangharakshita, 1991). Hence, the Buddhist philosophy entails dissociating from desire to put an end to suffering. Buddhism spread from India to China and also to other countries in Asia, such as Korea, Japan, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Over the years, Buddhism has gained followers and has spread to other countries.

Hinduism

In comparison to the three eastern philosophies mentioned above, the Hindu tradition differs in the sense that it does not have a specific founder and its not clear when this tradition began. The main teachings of this tradition emphasize the interconnectedness of all things and emphasis is on the personal improvement. The goal is to live one's life correctly so that one can go to afterlife without repeating life's lessons in a reincarnated form. The quest of one's life is to attain ultimate self-knowledge and to strive for ultimate self-improvement. This is known as *Karma*. Hence, the good life in this tradition encompasses continually doing good actions. The idea of a harmonious union among all individuals is woven throughout the teachings of Hinduism that refer to a single unifying principle underlying all the earth.

1.5.3 East and West

Value systems

The cultural differences between the West and the East can be understood by looking into their value systems. Most western cultures are individualistic while most Eastern cultures are collectivistic. In individualistic cultures, the individual is the main focus and competition and achievement are valued. Whereas in collectivistic cultures, the group is valued above the

individual and cooperation is highly valued. This difference determines what is considered strengths in a culture.

For instance, Western cultures value autonomy and personal freedom. In contrast, this is not considered strength in Eastern cultures where cooperation is given more importance. In collectivistic cultures, sharing and duty towards the group is highly prized. Emphasis is also given on “going with the flow” and avoiding conflict.

This is also evident in the kind of stories prevalent in these cultures. In western stories, the hero single-handedly fights evil (Sleeping beauty, Rapunzel etc). Many stories also involve seeking personal gain rather than the gain of the community. The emphasis on the gain to the community and getting together to fight the devil is found in most Eastern stories.

Orientation to time

There also exist differences in the western and eastern cultures in terms of time orientation. Whereas the western culture is more oriented to the future, the Eastern culture gives greater focus on and respect for the past.

Thought processes

Looking deeply into the thought processes of people in western and eastern cultures, some major differences can be seen. The easterners have a more circular thinking style depicted by the Taoist figure of the yin and the yang symbol. The figure represents the circular and ever changing nature of the world. The dark part represents the feminine and the passive while the light side represents masculine and active. Each part exists because of the other and cannot exist alone.

This is reflected in the life pursuits of people in these cultures. In most western cultures priority is given to right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the goals are different for people in the eastern cultures. The goal of the easterner is to achieve balance.

Differences in routes to attain positive outcomes

Differences also exist between western and eastern cultures in terms of the routes to attain positive outcomes. Westerners focus more on the individual goal(s) while easterners focus more on group or community goals. Westerners focus more on hope while easterners focus more on compassion and harmony.

Individualism and hope

Hope refers to the agentic, goal focused thinking. It is deeply interwoven in the western civilization. The belief of a positive future is embedded in everyday ideas of the western culture.

Collectivism: Compassion and harmony

In the main eastern philosophical traditions, compassion and harmony are repeatedly mentioned. The idea of compassion can be found both in eastern and western philosophical traditions. Cassell (2009) mentions three components of compassion: the difficulties of the recipient must be serious; the recipient's difficulties cannot be self-inflicted; and the observers must be able to identify the recipient's suffering. He describes compassion as a unilateral emotion directed outward from oneself.

In eastern cultures harmony is considered to be crucial for happiness. The concept of nirvana in Buddhist teachings also refers to a state of harmony, balance and equilibrium.

Culture and the meaning of a good life

The conceptions of a good life are shaped by the ideals, values and religious traditions of a particular culture. Hence, researchers in the area of positive psychology want to draw out universal principles from culture specific ideas about a good life.

Positive psychology recently moved from describing the meaning of a good life to exploring the ways and means to achieve it. Eastern philosophy offers a complete account in this regard. Eastern ideas of health and happiness and the ways suggested to achieve them represent a very important agenda in positive psychology.

1.6 Classifications and measures of strengths and positive outcomes

Subject matter of positive psychology can be classified into three domains (Seligman 2002):

The first domain is the pleasant life which deals with positive emotions about the past, present, and future. It aims to maximize positive emotions and minimize negative emotions. Next is the engaged life which deals with positive individual traits and engaging with interesting activities. The meaningful life deals with positive institutions and refers to having meaning and purpose in one's life.

Positive psychology is a young field. Even in its short history it has focuses on many aspects of happy and healthy living. However, there are some areas that have yet to be explored in depth. One of such areas is the intersection between culture and positive psychology. Positive psychology is often criticized for taking a Western perspective. It is also said that the concepts and theories of positive psychology apply more to developed countries who are now in a post-materialistic era. Hence, positive psychology must take in from other cultures, concepts of good life and the factors affecting happiness.

Positive health refers to well-being beyond the mere absence of disease. Positive health aims to empirically identify health assets by determining factors that predict health and illness. The health assets include biological, subjective, functional health assets etc. Positive Health is patterned after positive psychology which focuses on the presence of specific psychological assets of PERMA—positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (Peterson, Park and Seligman, 2005; Seligman, 2011; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Clifton wanted to study what is right with people. He believed that talents could be studied in various settings. He stated that talents are natural. According to him, strengths are extensions of talent and it combines talent with related knowledge and skills. He also believed that success is closely related to personal talents, strengths and analytical intelligence.

Clifton and his colleagues identified about three dozen themes of talents.

The Clifton Strengths Finder Themes

- ***Achiever*** – People strong in this theme have a constant drive for accomplishing tasks. They like being busy and productive
- ***Activator*** - People strong in this theme act to start things in motion and turn thoughts into actions
- ***Adaptability*** - People strong in this theme easily accommodate to changes in plan. They prefer to go with the flow
- ***Analytical*** - People strong in this theme require data to make sense of their circumstances.
- ***Arranger*** - People strong in this theme enjoy juggling many tasks and variables to a reach an outcome
- ***Belief*** - People strong in this theme attempt to find meaning behind everything that they undertake

- **Command** - People strong in this theme take up positions of leadership
- **Communication** - People strong in this theme use words to inspire action and are good conversationalists
- **Competition** - People strong in this theme thrive on competition to be successful
- **Connectedness** - People strong in this theme seek to unite others
- **Consistency** - People strong in this theme believe in treating everyone the same
- **Context** - People strong in this theme use the past to make better decisions in the present
- **Deliberative** - People strong in this theme proceed with caution, and always seek to have a plan
- **Developer** - People strong in this theme recognize and enhance the hidden potential in others
- **Discipline** - People strong in this theme seek to make sense of the world by imposing order
- **Empathy** - People strong in this theme understand the emotions of others
- **Focus** - People strong in this theme require a clear sense of direction
- **Futuristic** - People strong in this theme have a keen sense of the future
- **Harmony** - People strong in this theme seek to avoid conflict through consensus
- **Ideation** - People strong in this theme are able at finding underlying concepts that unite ideas
- **Includer** - People strong in this theme instinctively work to include everyone
- **Individualization** - People strong in this theme tap the uniqueness of individuals
- **Input** - People strong in this theme constantly collect information for future use
- **Intellection** - People strong in this theme enjoy thinking and thought-provoking conversation
- **Learner** - People strong in this theme learn new things to feel successful
- **Maximizer** - People strong in this theme try to take things from great to excellent
- **Positivity** - People strong in this theme try to look at the bright-side to any situation
- **Relator** - People strong in this theme prefer fewer, but deeper relationships
- **Responsibility** - People strong in this theme follow their commitments
- **Restorative** - People strong in this theme love to solve difficult problems

- *Self-Assurance* - People strong in this theme stay true to their beliefs, and have confidence in their ability
- *Significance* - People strong in this theme want to be seen as significant by others
- *Strategic* - People strong in this theme are able to see a clear direction even in a complex situation
- *Woo* – WOO stands for winning over other

1.6.1 The VIA Classification of Virtues and Strengths

Peterson and Seligman state that there is a language in psychology to talk about the negative aspects and what is wrong with people but an equal terminology to describe human strengths is lacking. The VIA classification provides such a language and provides a strength based approach to diagnosis and treatment.

The VIA classification began with the question of defining the concepts of strength and highest potential. It also aimed to assess the efficacy of a positive youth development program. Peterson, Seligman and other colleagues concluded that character included virtues, character strengths and situational themes.

1.6.2 Distinguishing Virtues, Character Strengths, and Situational Themes

Virtues are the core characteristics which are valued such as wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. These six categories of virtue are considered to be universal. If a person possesses these virtues at above-threshold values he is considered to be of good character.

Character strengths are the psychological processes that display the virtues.

Situational themes are habits by virtue of which people manifest certain character strengths in given situations.

Themes differ from character strengths in since they are located in specific situations. Themes in themselves are neither good nor bad; they can be used to achieve strengths but can also be used for wrong purposes.

1.6.3 The VIA Classification of Virtues and Strengths

1. *Wisdom and Knowledge* – Cognitive strengths related to the acquisition and use of knowledge

Creativity

Love of Learning

Curiosity

Perspective

Judgment

2. *Courage* – Emotional strengths involving the will to achieve goals in the face of difficulties

Bravery

Honesty

Perseverance

Zest

3. *Humanity* - Interpersonal strengths

Love

Social Intelligence

Kindness

4. *Justice*

Teamwork

Leadership

Fairness

5. *Temperance* – Strengths that protect against excess

Forgiveness

Prudence

Humility

Self-Regulation

6. *Transcendence* - Strengths that make connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

Gratitude

Spirituality

Hope

Appreciation of beauty and

Humor

excellence

UNIT II: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN CONTEXT

Thinking and philosophizing about happiness dates to the dawn of civilization. Ideas about what happiness is and how to achieve it have undergone a considerable change. Happiness is usually defined in terms of a good life, or flourishing. Happiness in this sense was used to refer to the Greek concept Eudaimonia.

Aristotle valued intellectual powers over practical ones. For most ancient Greeks, happiness was largely related to luck and fortune. The important thing for Aristotle was to live virtuously. **Epicurus** and his followers considered happiness to be the presence of pleasure and absence of pain. Later, in the Middle Ages, the issue focused on one's relationship to God, but Enlightenment thinkers in the 17th and 18th centuries saw it more as a self-evident truth.

In 1776, America's Founding Fathers declared the "pursuit of happiness" as an unalienable right apart from life and liberty. In the 19th century, Matthey noted, British utilitarians like John Stuart Mill sought to define and measure the value of actions by how much happiness they produce, the quality of that happiness and how it was distributed throughout society. "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied," Mill famously said. Matthey further explained Mill's reasoning: "The greater the quantity of happiness spread most widely over the population, that the action produces, the better the action is."

Ed Diener compiled data from 916 surveys of happiness in 45 nations and found out that the average person is moderately happy. Happiness and well-being refer to both positive feelings and positive states. Positive psychology focuses on understanding happiness and subjective well-being and ascertaining factors that influence them. Positive psychology aims to enhance subjective well-being and happiness. Thus, positive psychology complements rather than replaces traditional clinical psychology.

2.1 Developing strengths and living well

Well-being includes subjective, social and psychological dimensions. Psychological well-being, social well-being and health-related quality of life are constructs related to, but distinct from, subjective wellbeing.

2.1.1 Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being refers to the achievement of one's full psychological potential. The construct is central to the humanistic tradition. Professor **Carol Ryff** is the leading researcher in this area. She has developed a scale called The *Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being*. It measures multiple facets of psychological wellbeing as the following:

- autonomy
- environmental mastery
- personal growth
- positive relations with others
- purpose in life
- self-acceptance

Keyes et al. (2002) in a factor analytic study involving over 3,000 Americans aged 25-74 found that psychological well-being and subjective well-being were related, but distinct, constructs which correlated differentially with socio-demographic variables and personality.

2.1.2 Social well-being

Social well-being refers to positive states associated with optimal functioning within one's social network and community. It refers to an end state in which basic human needs are met and people coexist peacefully. There is an equal access to basic facilities such as water, food, shelter, health services etc.

2.1.3 Quality of life

Quality of life is a far broader construct than subjective well-being. It covers a variety of domains including health status, work-role status, recreational opportunities, social functioning, health-care resources, standard of living and general well-being.

2.1.4 Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being has three components: a cognitive component (life satisfaction) and positive and negative affect (Diener, 1984). Happiness is describes as a state of greater frequency

and intensity of positive affect over negative affect. Pleasant and unpleasant affect have been found to be independent of each other.

2.2 Meaning and measure of happiness

Happiness seems to be one of those terms that people understand until they try to define it. Indeed, defining happiness has turned out to be much more contentious than defining positive psychology. Even in philosophy, defining happiness is a troublesome issue.

Positive psychologists often refer to two types of happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic. Briefly, *hedonic happiness* refers to how happy you feel whereas *eudaimonic happiness* involves being true to your authentic self. Researchers interested in eudaimonic happiness are most interested in whether individuals are using their capacities—both their general human capacities and their own peculiar individual strengths—to flourish in life.

Most positive psychologists follow Aristotle in their understanding of eudaimonia; nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that Aristotle was one of several different ancient Greek philosophers who took the eudaimonic approach to happiness. All of these approaches, however, emphasized the importance of fulfilling one's *true nature*. In this sense, eudaimonic happiness is achieved when we fulfill our true human potential. We flourish when our life fulfills our human capacities. Aristotle tended to emphasize the importance of becoming a virtuous person. Importantly for Aristotle, it was the virtues that should be pursued, not happiness in and of itself.

There are several advantages to the eudaimonic tradition of happiness. Perhaps most importantly, this approach does not divorce morality and virtue from the study of happiness. Most of us would agree with Aristotle in that a life simply filled with consumptive pleasure is not a happy life. Cows may have all the pleasure of eating grass and grain to their hearts' content, but are they really happy? No. Aristotle would claim that the authentically happy life is also the virtuous life.

The eudaimonic view of happiness is an important tradition that positive psychologists would be foolish to neglect. But there are a number of problems with this approach to defining happiness. First, it can come across as being overly prescriptive or even paternalistic. The eudaimonic definition of happiness basically tells people that they have to be doing certain things

or they have to be developing certain qualities or they aren't happy, regardless of whether they think they are happy.

But the real rub involves the issue of human nature. What really are our capacities as humans? What is my personal potential? What are the human needs that need to be satisfied in order to flourish? On this issue, even among eudaimonic theorists, there is little agreement. A related issue has to do with the measurement of this kind of happiness. Although measures have been developed for this construct (often referred to as measures of *psychological wellbeing*), are they really measuring eudaimonic happiness? A good measure of Aristotle's eudaimonia would accurately assess whether we really are fulfilling our human potential.

2.2.1 Components of Happiness

The components of happiness include high positive affect, absence of negative affect and high life satisfaction. Thus the affective factors represent the emotional experience of joy, elation, contentment, positive emotions and cognitive factors represent cognitive evaluation of satisfaction (Andrews & McKennel, 1980).

2.2.2 Causes of Happiness and well being

Well-being is a dynamic concept that includes subjective, social, and psychological dimensions. Psychological well-being, social well-being and health-related quality of life are constructs related to, but distinct from, subjective well-being. A number of factors that contribute to happiness are as follows:

Personality traits and happiness: Personality studies of happiness show that happy and unhappy people have distinctive personality profiles (Diener et al., 1999). Happy people in western cultures are found to be extraverted, optimistic, having high self-esteem and an internal locus of control. In contrast, unhappy people are found to be high on neuroticism. However, a significant relationship has not been found between intelligence and happiness.

Cultural factors partially determine the types of personality factors associated with happiness. In western individualistic cultures such as the USA, self-esteem and acting in

congruence with one's personal beliefs and personality factors is associated with high levels of subjective well-being. However, subjective wellbeing is not correlated with these factors in eastern collectivist societies. Therefore, it can be said that cultural values partially determine personality traits that affect subjective well-being, probably because these traits are associated with achieving culturally valued goals (Triandis, 2000).

Genetic and environmental basis for personality traits: Evidence shows that 50 per cent of the variance in major personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism may be accounted for by genetic factors (Riemann et al., 1997). Whereas children with high activity levels and positive affect become extraverted, and hence more likely to be happy, children who are highly irritable and fearful show high levels of neuroticism in later life and so are more likely to show negative affectivity.

Optimism, self-esteem and locus of control are also personality traits which correlate with happiness. Secure attachment is also related to these personal strengths. Optimistic children learn their optimism from their parents who adopt an optimistic explanatory style (Seligman, 1998).

Heritability of a happiness set-point: Professor **David Lykken (1999)**, in the Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart, found that about half of the variance in current happiness or subjective well-being is due to genetic factors. However, the set-point for happiness (stable point around which people's mood varies over periods such as a decade) is about 98 per cent determined genetically.

Culture and Happiness: Specific cultural and socio-political factors have also been found to play an important role in determining happiness (Triandis, 2000). In cross-cultural studies consistently been a relationship is found between subjective well-being and living in a stable democracy. Cultures in which there is social equality have higher mean levels of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is greater in individualist cultures than in collectivist cultures. Happiness is also associated with important features of government institutions. Subjective well-being is higher in welfare states; in countries in which public institutions run efficiently: and in which there are satisfactory relationships between the citizens and bureaucracy members.

Relationships and Happiness

Marriage: Married people have been found to be happier than unmarried people, be they divorced, separated or never married (Myers, 2000). However, the least happy of all are people in unhappy marriages. Marriages in which people communicate clearly and respectfully and forgive each other's faults are usually associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

Partners similar in personality, physical attractiveness, attitudes, interests, and values are more likely to experience marital satisfaction, and provide their children with a stable environment. The association between marital status and happiness has been found in studies of 40 nations around the world regardless of the divorce rate or the effects of living in an individualist culture (Diener et al., 1999).

However, effects of unmarried cohabitation on happiness are affected by culture. In individualistic cultures, cohabiting couples are happier than married couples, but in collectivist countries they are unhappy than married or single people.

Kinship: Close ties between parents and children, between siblings, and between extended family members enlarge the social support network of an individual. Social support enhances subjective well-being and from an evolutionary perspective we are 'hard-wired' to derive happiness from this contact with our kinship network.

Friendship: Maintaining a few close confiding relationships has been found to correlate with happiness and subjective well-being.

Acquaintances: Co-operation with acquaintances, who are neither family nor close friends, is a potential source of happiness and a way of avoiding unhappiness due to loss of status and inequalities which inevitably arises from regular involvement in competition (Buss, 2000).

Religion and spirituality: Moderate correlations have been found between happiness and involvement in religious activity in North American studies (Myers, 2000). This could be due to the following reasons: *First*, religion provides a belief system through which people to find meaning and hope (Seligman, 2002). *Second*, the involvement religious activities like visiting the

place of worship, doing charity etc provides people with social support. *Third*, involvement in religion leads to a healthier lifestyle.

The Environment and Happiness: More pleasant physical environments are moderately associated with happiness. Geographical location, housing, weather and the availability of music can all have short-term positive effects on well-being.

Geographical location and other aspects of the environment: Well being has been found to be associated with being in natural rather than artificial environments. People report positive feelings in geographical locations where there is vegetation, water and panoramic views (Ulrich et al., 1991).

Good weather induces positive moods. When the sun is shining, when it's warm but not too warm, and when there is low humidity, people report more positive moods (Cunningham, 1979). Moderate correlations have been found between the quality of housing and life satisfaction. Indicators of the quality of housing include geographical location, rooms per person, room size and availability of heating (Andrews and Withey, 1976).

Music has been shown in surveys and mood induction experiments to induce short-term positive mood states and to reduce aggression (Hills and Argyle, 1998; Argyle, 2001).

Health: While subjective ratings of personal health correlate with happiness, objective health ratings made by physicians do not correlate with happiness (except where people are severely disabled) (Diener et al., 1999). The immune systems of happy people work more effectively than those of unhappy people (Stone et al., 1994).

Exercise: In the short term, exercise induces positive mood states and in the long term regular exercise leads to greater happiness (Sarafino, 2002).

Productivity and Happiness: Employment status, job satisfaction, and goal-directed activity are all associated with subjective wellbeing and there is also an association between education and happiness in certain circumstances.

Work: Employment status is related to happiness. Employed people are happier than those who are unemployed, and people in professional and skilled jobs being happier than those in unskilled jobs (Argyle, 2001). Job satisfaction and happiness have a moderate correlation of about $r=0.4$ (Diener et al., 1999).

Education: Education level is positively correlated with happiness and this relationship is particularly strong for low income groups in developed countries and populations in poorer countries (Diener et al., 1999).

Goal attainment: People report greater happiness on days when they achieve highly valued goals than on days when they achieve less valued goals (Diener et al., 1999).

Recreation and Happiness: Rest, relaxation, good food and leisure activities all have positive short-term effects on happiness (Argyle, 2001).

2.3 Subjective Well Being:

The hedonic approach offers a more parsimonious account for defining happiness. A simple definition of *hedonic happiness* is the positive balance of one's emotional experiences. If you have more pleasant than unpleasant emotional experiences, then you are considered to be a happy person. But as stated earlier, most of us look at happiness as a more enduring state and not simply as the sum of our positive and negative experiences. Indeed, positive psychologists also prefer to view happiness in this way. Thus, the dominant hedonic happiness approach prefers to identify happiness with what they refer to as Subjective Well Being: "People's evaluations of their lives" that "encompasses both cognitive judgments of satisfaction and affective appraisals of moods and emotions."

From this perspective, the components of Subjective Well Being are: life satisfaction, high positive emotion, and lack of negative emotion. Life satisfaction here involves two aspects: global satisfaction with one's life, as well as satisfaction with specific domains of life that are important to well-being (satisfaction with one's marriage, one's friends, one's job, one's leisure activities, etc.)

One criticism of the hedonic approach to happiness is that it divorces the study of happiness from the study of virtue. Whereas some might argue that this is an advantage of the hedonic approach, in philosophy, rarely is the study of happiness divorced from ethics, and this is certainly consistent with the rich tradition of classical philosophy offered to us by figures such as Aristotle. Although it is certainly true that the hedonic definition of happiness tends to exclude virtue, emphasizing a hedonic definition of happiness and well-being need not divorce the study of happiness from the study of virtue. Human strengths and virtues will indeed be important to the study of happiness because we will see how important virtue is to Subjective Well Being.

2.4 Self-Realization

The Bhagawad Geeta asks us to be predominated by sattva which is the principle of illumination. The pursuit of desires (kaama), wealth (artha), values (dharma) and liberation (moksha) is considered as the main aim of life. The Indian tradition focuses a lot on giving (daan) and helping those in need. These help in developing a feeling of happiness and well-being for the giver as well as the receiver.

Hence, in the Indian philosophy well-being and good life were to be achieved more in terms of restraint, and detachment. Hence meaning, purpose, and well-being depends on the evolutionary status of the individual.

Self-realization and expansion of consciousness is considered as the highest aim of human life which leads to a state of bliss.

2.5 Views of Happiness

Two important concepts emerge from this understanding of happiness: (a) happiness is enduring (it's not just that I feel pleased in the moment), and (b) happiness is global (I'm satisfied with my life as a whole, not just with select domains in my life).

Ancient Greek Ideas of Happiness

The rich Greek tradition of happiness involves much more than Aristotle and the eudaimonic approach described earlier. For example, many Greek philosophers followed a hedonistic

approach to happiness. But even the most famous hedonists— the Epicureans—had a much more nuanced view of happiness than popular hedonism would suggest. Indeed, those of the Epicurean camp were much more likely to represent happiness as the “pleasures of tranquility,” rather than the accumulation of raw unadulterated pleasure. One thing that seemed to distinguish the Epicureans from the disciples of Aristotle, however, was that this tranquil, happy life could be an explicit goal, whereas for Aristotle any kind of psychic harmony was simply the result of the virtuous life. Even the Stoics—who strove to push pleasure and pain toward the margins of life— felt that inner psychological harmony was an important aspect of the virtuous life. Thus, for virtually all philosophers, the good life was a pleasant life, although they would emphasize different paths to this end.

But as McMahon has emphasized (2006, 2008), there was always something of a tragic theme in the Greek approach to happiness for it seemed that happiness for the Greeks was never completely under one’s control; for one never knew when luck, fate, or the capricious act of some god might completely derail one’s journey to happiness. McMahon emphasizes that this theme seems to come through in early Judeo-Christian thought as well, albeit in a notably different form.

Many theories of happiness have been proposed which can be categorized into three groups:

- (1) Need and goal satisfaction theories,
- (2) Process or activity theories, and
- (3) Genetic and personality predisposition theories.

Need and goal satisfaction theories focus on the idea that the reduction of tensions, satisfaction of needs, and moving towards a valued goal leads to happiness.

Process or activity theories state that engagement in an activity provides happiness. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that *people are happiest when they are engaged in interesting activities that match their level of skill*. He calls this the state of “flow”.

Other theorists argue that subjective well-being is influenced by personality dispositions. Some of these important traits are extraversion, neuroticism, hope, dispositional optimism etc.

Income is consistently related to subjective well-being. Age and sex are related to subjective well-being, but these effects are small. Marital status and religious activity are also positively correlated with subjective well-being.

With the rise in empirical research on happiness, a central question is how happiness might be measured. A complete device might be impossible even in principle, since happiness might involve multiple dimensions.

2.5.1 Indian Perspective on Happiness

The philosophy of Charvaaka is a materialist view which states that the fulfilment of desires leads to pleasure. It reflects the hedonistic perspective. A second perspective is based in transcendental view of reality. Happiness and well-being according to this view is subjective and this view aims for the wellbeing of everyone in the universe. A third perspective is the collectivist perspective.

The Vedic and Upanishadic texts defined the ultimate truth with reference to permanent and impermanent. To realize the Atman and to know that Atman and Brahman are the same was considered as the path to liberation or moksha.

UNIT III: POSITIVE EMOTIONAL STATES & PROCESSES

3.1 Understanding positive affect

In the early psychological literature, negative emotions were largely discussed while positive emotional states were relatively ignored. This can be attributed to the fact that negative emotions have an obvious survival value. The first major breakthrough in this regard happened in 1975, with the publication of Paul Meehl's discussion of "hedonic capacity".

3.1.1 Affective factors:

It contains high positive affect, low negative affect and high life satisfaction. It encompasses all the feeling states having tremendous influence on our behaviour. It influences the way information is encoded, processed, organized and retrieved (Kahneman, 2005).

3.1.2 Nature of Affect:

Positive affect (PA) reflects the extent to which a person is active, excited, strong and enthusiastic, whereas low positive affect reflects fatigue. Positive affect has a favourable impact on learning, creativity, problem solving and interpersonal relationship (Isen, Daubman & Nowiski, 1987; Kahn & Isen, 1993).

Negative emotions (NA) in contrast represent the extent to which a person feels upset or unpleasant, distressed, nervous, guilty or anxious etc. Negative Affect is associated with psychological complaints and poor mental health.

3.1.3 Positive and Negative Affectivity:

There are between 550 and 600 words for different emotional experiences in the English language (Averill, 1997). There is good evidence that a dimensional approach accounts for much of the variability in emotional experiences (Larsen and Deiner, 1992; Watson and Tellegen, 1985). An extreme range of emotional experiences may be described in terms of the circumflex

space defined by two broad dimensions. It states that affect exists in two dimensions. One describing positive vs. negative valence (example happy or sad), and other delineating activations levels (example arousal vs. no arousal).

Positive affectivity is associated with regular physical activity; adequate sleep; regular socializing with close friends; and striving for valued goals (rather than attaining them). So positive affectivity may probably be enhanced through engaging in regular physical exercise; maintain a regular and adequate pattern of sleeping; making and maintaining strong friendships and socializing frequently with supportive friends; and through working toward personally valued goals (Watson, 2002).

Individuals high on positive affectivity are usually cheerful, enthusiastic, and experience frequent episodes of pleasurable mood. In contrast, persons low in positive affectivity report low levels of happiness, excitement, and confidence.

Negative affect works on withdrawal-oriented behavioral inhibition, whereas positive affect works on approach-oriented behavioral facilitation system. This system is adaptive since it helps in obtaining resources thereby facilitating survival.

Happy people usually experience high positive affectivity and low negative affectivity. Negative affectivity is strongly related to Neuroticism. Positive Affect is strongly linked with Extraversion. Diener and Diener (1996) showed that most people report experiencing moderate levels of positive emotionality.

Many studies have been done to identify the factors affecting positive affectivity.

Genetic Evidence: Positive affectivity is strongly heritable. Heritability estimates for Extraversion derived from twin studies generally fall in the .40 to .60 range (Clark & Watson, 1999).

Demographic and Environmental Correlates: Many researches have examined how various demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and socioeconomic status are related to individual differences in happiness, and affectivity. Results show that objective demographic factors are not very good predictors of happiness and positive affectivity. Men and women report almost identical levels of happiness and positive affectivity. Two variables are consistent predictors of positive affectivity:

- Many studies have shown that positive affectivity is moderately correlated with various indicators of social behaviour.
- Spiritual or religious people report higher levels of happiness.

Psychopathology: Low levels of positive affectivity have been found to be associated with a number of clinical syndromes such as social phobia, posttraumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, substance disorders and mood disorders.

Job and Marital Satisfaction: Studies have shown that individuals high in positive affectivity report greater satisfaction with important aspects of their lives such as job and marriage. This could be due to the fact that individuals high in positive affectivity feel good about themselves and other things around them.

3.1.4 Enhancing Positive affectivity

Given that positive affectivity leads to so many positive outcomes, it becomes an important goal to achieve. The question is can positive affectivity be enhanced or improved? Evidence suggests that change is possible.

Three general principles: Studies have shown that high levels of positive mood are most likely when a person is actively engaged with pleasurable activities. Two of such activities are interpersonal behavior and physical activity.

Contemporary researchers show that striving after goals also leads to happiness and positive affectivity.

Finally, attempts at change would be more successful if they are based on an understanding of our mood systems.

3.2 Positive emotions and well-being

The term ‘emotion’ is notoriously difficult to define. As Fehr and Russell put it: ‘everyone knows what emotion is until asked to give a Definition’. Yet we all use this term and seem to

easily understand to what, in our experience, it relates. Psychologists often employ the notion of affect * as an umbrella term for various positive and negative emotions, feelings and moods we frequently experience and easily recognise.

Seligman (2002) in his book *Authentic Happiness* classifies positive emotions into three categories: those associated with the past such as satisfaction, contentment etc, the present and the future such as optimism, and hope. Momentary pleasures and more enduring gratifications are related to the present. Gratifications involve states of absorption that result from engagement in activities in which the unique signature strengths are utilized.

Positive emotions have received little empirical attention since traditionally the focus was more on psychological problems and their remedies. Another reason could be that there is a habit among emotion theorists of creating general models of emotions which typically focus on negative emotions with positive emotions added later.

Positive emotions facilitate approach behaviors. They motivate individuals to engage with their environments and undertake activities which facilitate adaptation and survival.

3.2.1 The value of positive emotions

For years, psychology turned its attention to the study of negative emotions or negative affect, including: depression, sadness, anger, stress and anxiety. Not surprisingly, psychologists found them interesting because they may often lead to, or signal the presence of, psychological disorders. However, positive emotions are no less fascinating, if only because of many common sense misconceptions that exist about positive affect. We tend to think, for example, that positive affect typically, by its very nature, distorts or disrupts orderly, effective thinking, that positive emotions are somehow 'simple' or that, because these emotions are shortlived, they cannot have a long term impact. Research has shown the above not to be the case but it took it a while to get there. It is only relatively recently that psychologists realised that positive emotions can be seen as valuable in their own right, and started studying them.

Negative emotions, like anxiety or anger, are associated with tendencies to act in specific ways, which are adaptive in evolutionary terms, i.e. the fight and flight response. Thus, fear contributes to a tendency to escape and anger to a tendency to attack. If our ancestors were not equipped with such effective emotional tools, our own existence could have been doubtful.

Moreover, negative emotions seem to narrow our action repertoires (or actual behaviours) – when running from danger we are unlikely to appreciate a beautiful sunset. This function of negative emotions can help minimise distractions in an acute situation. Positive emotions, on the other hand, are not associated with specific actions. So what good are they, apart from the fact that they merely feel good? What is the point in feeling happy or joyful, affectionate or ecstatic?

The ‘broadenandbuild’ theory of positive emotions, developed by Barbara Fredrickson, shows that positive affective experiences contribute and have a long lasting effect on our personal growth and development .

(a) Positive emotions broaden our thought action repertoires: First of all, positive emotions broaden our attention and thinking, which means that we have more positive and a greater variety of thoughts. When we are experiencing positive emotions, like joy or interest, we are more likely to be creative, to see more opportunities, to be open to relationships with others, to play, to be more flexible and open minded.

(b) Positive emotions undo negative emotions: It’s hard to experience both positive and negative emotions simultaneously, thus a deliberate experience of positive emotions at times when negative emotions are dominant can serve to undo their lingering effects. Mild joy and contentment can eliminate the stress experienced at a physiological level.

(c) Positive emotions enhance resilience: Enjoyment, happy playfulness, contentment, satisfaction, warm friendship, love, and affection all enhance resilience and the ability to cope, while negative emotions, in contrast, decrease them. Positive emotions can enhance problem focused coping, positive reappraisal, or infusing negative events with positive meaning, all of which facilitate fast bouncing back after an unpleasant event

(d) Positive emotions build psychological repertoire: Far from having only a momentary effect, positive emotions help to build important physical, intellectual, social and psychological resources that are enduring, even though the emotions themselves are temporary. For example, the positive emotions associated with play can build physical abilities and selfmastery, enjoyable times with friends – increase social skills.

(e) *Positive emotions can trigger an upward developmental spiral*: More than that, just as negative emotions can lead one into downward spirals of depression, positive emotions can trigger upward developmental spirals towards improved emotional wellbeing and transform people into better versions of themselves.

3.3 Emotion-focused coping

There have been several attempts to categorize coping strategies into broad areas of classification. According to Lazarus (1991), “coping processes alter the person environment relationship either in reality or in its appraised meaning, both of which, in turn, change the prior emotional state” (p. 87). Two major types of coping strategies include *problem-focused coping* strategies and *emotion-focused coping* strategies. At least three of the most often used and cited measures of coping have a division of subscales based on the problem- and emotion-focused classifications.

Problem-focused coping is defined as efforts at reducing stressors and demands that are impacting one’s resources. Examples of problem-focused coping include problem assessment and identification, problem-solving through the development of alternative courses of action, and, ultimately, moving toward problem resolution, thus changing the stressful situation for the better.

Emotion-focused coping, alternatively, is defined as efforts aimed at managing one’s own emotional dysregulation. Examples of emotion-focused coping strategies include avoidance, seeking emotional support, venting of emotions, denial, and positive reappraisal. Historically, problem-focused coping has been associated with greater psychological well-being and emotion-focused coping has been associated with greater psychological distress.

Recently, there has been attention devoted to developing a model of emotion-focused coping that emphasizes the adaptive potential of incorporating emotional processing into coping. Stanton and her colleagues (2002) defined *emotional-approach coping* as comprised of two separate factors: “emotional processing (i.e., active attempts to acknowledge and understand emotions) and emotional expression” (p. 152). Thus, emotional approach coping is similar in process to problem-focused coping in as much as the strategies are to move toward the stressor and the resulting emotional consequences, as opposed to away from the stressor. Additionally, this classification of coping strategies suggests that regulating one’s own emotions through examination and acceptance (among other things) can be a useful endeavor in coping with both external and internal stressors.

3.3.1 Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping

Although earlier accounts of coping described these efforts as neutral, there has been some recent debate in the coping literature as to whether all coping can be classified as “adaptive” or if there are particular coping strategies that would be classified as “maladaptive.” For example, many researchers and theorists have made the argument that coping strategies emphasizing escape or avoidance of stressors or a focus on one’s own emotions (however, see previous discussion of emotion-approach coping) can be considered maladaptive. Problem-focused coping, most frequently, is described as an adaptive form of coping. The primary difficulty in attempts to classify any coping strategy as either adaptive or maladaptive is that this classification effort is inherently tautological. In other words, if a particular strategy has adaptive outcomes then this is an adaptive strategy and if the outcomes are maladaptive or negative for the individual, the strategy is defined as maladaptive. Thus, removing the conflation of outcome and coping strategy calls into question some of the evidence that particular coping strategies are inherently maladaptive.

Another potential classification of adaptive and maladaptive coping is to focus on the individual differences related to coping and determine trait level distinctions. One such individual difference that has received significant attention, particularly in the pediatric psychology literature, is resiliency. *Resilience* has been described as both a form of coping (e.g., traumatic growth) and an individual difference that results in *improved* functioning (physical, psychological, and/or emotional) in the face of significant stressors and adversity (e.g., protective factors). The research question is how an individual emerges from a situation that might traumatize others without developing or demonstrating some sort of pathology or lasting negative consequences. If the processes by which resiliency is manifested can be identified *and* if these processes are malleable, practitioners would be able to utilize the research on resiliency to teach effective coping to others.

Just as the model of the cognitive transaction largely replaced a static model of stress and coping, it is likely that the most useful determination of the effectiveness or adaptability of a coping strategy will be in a transactional model that considers the person, the coping strategy, the environment, and the stressor. For example, from the time of defense mechanisms to emotion-focused coping, denial and avoidance have long been considered a maladaptive coping strategy or mechanism. It is not hard to imagine, however, a stressor, person, and situation for which denial or avoidance might be an adaptive coping strategy in the short term. There are countless examples in which an individual denies the odds of recovery and surpasses all expectations or an individual denies some physical or psychological discomfort in the short-run to move toward a larger, adaptive goal. Furthermore, current research suggests that at times active attempts to avoid thinking about stressors results in increased distress while other

investigations demonstrate that actively avoiding negative information can result in decreased distress. It is possible that rigidly adhering to a specific set of coping strategies or rigidly refusing to develop new coping strategies may be evidence of a coping deficit and, therefore, leads to maladaptive outcomes for the individual.

3.3.2 Acute and Chronic Stressors

Although the function of coping remains the same, it is likely that the form of an individual's attempts at coping change over the course of time. Both internal and external stressors can be acute or chronic. For example, someone may get an excruciating headache one afternoon that seems to appear out of the blue and lasts for a few hours. Another person may have a similar headache on the same afternoon that results from a chronic condition that often produces such headaches. The chronic versus acute nature of these presentations may determine the type of coping strategy in which each individual engages. Both individuals may take some medication, drink water, and go to bed for the remainder of the day. For the first person in this example, that is likely the end of the coping necessary for this particular event. For the second person, however, there are probably more components to this particular coping event that are required to meet the demands of the stressor as the chronicity of the condition will likely begin to impact the individual emotionally, financially, and interpersonally in addition to the initial physiological and psychological effects. It is likely that more chronic stressors require more complex and diversified attempts at coping. Chronicity then becomes another factor that influences the person, environment, and strategy transaction as some strategies that may be effective for individuals with particular acute stressors may not be as effective with particular chronic stressors and may ultimately worsen the condition.

3.3.3 Applications of Coping

There are several important applications of the previously identified coping concepts for a variety of mental and physical health problems. For example, attention to the measurement and potential manipulation of appraisal variables has recently gained attention in the chronic health and disability literature. As discussed previously, a number of recent studies have indicated that the appraisal process significantly impacts individual adaptation to illness and injury. This work stems from the transactional model of stress and coping and demonstrates the importance of individual variation in the adjustment process for persons with chronic health conditions. Future research is needed to develop specific interventions to target change in the appraisal process in medical settings.

Additionally, continued development of models and empirical investigations of positive growth through coping following acquired disability and adaptation of persons with chronic health conditions to their environments is warranted. Unfortunately to date, researchers “have given only scant attention to positive growth and optimal living with chronic health problems, as well as the related searches for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment” (Elliott, Kurylo, & Rivera, 2002, p. 689). Only recently has attention shifted to focus on more comprehensive models in this area. For example, Elliott, Kurylo, and Rivera (2002) propose “an integrative and dynamic model” which conceptualizes adjustment following a disability in several broadbased domains (p. 689). Within such a model, primary components may involve individual characteristics and the immediate social and interpersonal environment, both of which influence the phenomenological and appraisal processes that comprise elements of positive growth and subsequently predict mental and physical health outcomes. These components can be viewed within a developmental continuum to reflect the ongoing process of adaptation and growth both within the person and the environment, and the changes in the interactions between the two. Empirical investigations are also needed in the coping literature that examine the correlates and associated individual differences of positive growth following disability. Because “loss events, especially those that are sudden or unexpected, often appear to initiate a personal evaluation or stocktaking of the meaning of one’s life,” longitudinal studies that follow individuals from the time of injury of an acquired disability or chronic illness would be particularly useful in determining the course of such growth (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 2002, p. 598). In addition, as disability and chronic health conditions also are viewed as social problems, investigation of social-environmental factors (e.g., family, socioeconomic status, community values) that influence individual adjustment (e.g., resilience, hope, motivation, personal values) and personality are needed. Studies designed to understand specific growth processes and positive transformations following loss associated with a disability will serve to inform the development of future positive psychology interventions. Interventions aimed at fostering positive life changes and helping individuals find new meaning and growth within their loss experiences will be particularly important as those living with one or more chronic health conditions are expected to increase substantially over the next few decades with the aging of society.

3.3.4 Positive Psychology and Coping

The integration of positive psychology and coping constructs represents a promising new area of theory and research. Coping is one area of positive psychology that is common to all individuals. Although all attempts at coping do not necessarily result in growth and flourishing, all people cope with the demands of internal and external environments that tax resources available to the individual. Thus, all organisms

cope in some way and understanding this potentially adaptive process and how to increase the effectiveness of such efforts is of fundamental importance to all people. Future investigations that provide new perspectives on successful coping and are amenable to empirical validation are needed. The degree to which such models and investigations can provide specific information about which strategies work, in what contexts, and for whom, will determine the degree to which such research can be applied to increase positive adaptations. Several recent investigations have begun to demonstrate preliminary support for fostering successful coping; however, further investigations in the area of intervention research are warranted and could potentially have enormous impact on coping.

3.4 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the newest area of interest in psychology. It has become the research focus of many leading psychologists. It has also found an important place in the organizational development industry. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage the emotions of oneself and others. Many intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies make up emotional intelligence. Whereas intrapersonal competencies include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, resilience and management of stress, interpersonal competencies include showing empathy, social skills and showing tolerance towards the beliefs of others.

The term emotional intelligence was popularized by psychologist and journalist Goleman (1995) in his book *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ*. Now it is usually recognized as a better predictor of managerial success than IQ. As Goleman puts it "it is not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant. They do matter but mainly as "threshold capabilities"; that is they are the entry level requirements for executive positions". But, rather it is emotional intelligence that differentiates between those who perform at an outstanding level and those who work at a basic level of competence.

The ability to be emotionally creative is not distinct from other abilities. Perhaps most relevant is emotional intelligence. In domains such as science and literature, a degree of cognitive intelligence is necessary for creativity; however, beyond a threshold necessary for success in a field, there is only a modest relation between intelligence as measured by IQ tests and cognitive creativity. The same appears to be true of the relation between tests of emotional intelligence and emotional creativity. One possible reason for only modest relation between emotional intelligence and emotional creativity is that the former is "convergent" and the latter

“divergent.” That is, emotional intelligence assumes a correct way to respond, as indicated by conformance to group standards. Conformance to the tried and true may facilitate effectiveness, but it downplays the importance of novelty and authenticity.

Mayer and Salovey defined (Emotional Intelligence) EI as the processes involved in perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions to solve emotion-laden problems and regulate behavior. These four domains are viewed as forming a hierarchy, increasing in complexity from emotion perception to management. One’s overall EI is the combination of the four abilities. The ability model discussed here is distinct from trait or other models of EI which define and measure EI as a set of personality characteristics and perceived capacities.

Perceiving emotions, the first domain, pertains to the ability to identify emotions in oneself and others, as well as those evoked by objects, stories, music, and other stimuli. The most basic aspects of this ability are identifying and differentiating emotions in one’s feelings, thoughts, and physical states, and expressing associated needs. At a more advanced level, this ability involves identifying emotions in other people using cues such as sound, appearance, language, and behavior; thus, enabling a person to discriminate between sincere and insincere emotional expressions and to be empathetic toward a grieving friend.

How can people utilize the emotions that they notice in themselves and others in order to reap maximum benefits? The second domain, *using emotions*, draws on emotion to focus attention and think more rationally, logically, and creatively. Due, in large part, to what positive psychology has already accomplished, the usefulness of soft concepts such as happiness, hope, courage, gratitude, or enjoyment is now recognized. Indeed, emotions can prioritize the cognitive system to attend to what is important, and help individuals focus on the best tasks to complete in a given mood. According to Barbara Fredrickson, positive emotions are not just reflections of optimal functioning – they actually produce it, both broadening a person’s mindset so that novel and creative responses are more likely and building resiliency to prepare for the future.

Emotionally intelligent people attend to and comprehend their own and others’ emotions, furthering the path toward growth. Thus, the third domain, *understanding emotion*, includes a vast knowledge of the emotion lexicon and the manner in which emotions combine with, progress, and transition from one another. The person who is able to understand emotions – their meanings, how they blend together, how they progress over time – is gifted with the capacity to understand important aspects of human nature and interpersonal relationships.

The fourth skill of EI is *managing emotions*, or the ability to regulate moods and emotions in oneself and in other people. When managing one's own feelings, one must be able to monitor, discriminate between, and label one's feelings accurately; believe that one can improve or modify these feelings; employ strategies that will alter one's feelings; and assess the effectiveness of these strategies. Central to emotion management is the ability to reflect upon and manage one's emotions. Emotional disclosure and acceptance and mindfulness practices have all proven to be useful for managing emotions. In general, the most successful regulation methods involve expenditure of energy; active mood management techniques that combine relaxation, stress management, cognitive effort, and exercise may be the most effective strategies for changing bad moods.

EI can help one to flourish in all aspects of life, including intra- and interpersonal functioning (e.g., mental and physical health, developing satisfying relationships with friends and loved ones), intellectual functioning (e.g., academic success), and occupational success (e.g., optimal performance at work).

3.4.1 Intra- and Interpersonal Flourishing

Because emotions provide information about one's relationship with the environment and others, interpreting and responding to that information can direct action and thought in ways that enhance or maintain well-being.

People high in EI have lower rates of anxiety and depression. Individuals higher in EI, and the managing emotions subcomponent in particular, also tend to be better at affective forecasting, or predicting how they will feel in the future.

EI is postulated to promote positive social functioning by focusing attention on important information in the environment, facilitating the ability to adopt others' perspectives, enhancing communication about emotions, and regulating behavior.

3.4.2 Intellectual Flourishing

EI is hypothesized to predict cognitive functioning because the abilities allow individuals to garner emotions to facilitate thinking and regulate emotions in order to focus on important information.

3.4.3 Occupational Flourishing

EI influences the capacity to interact and communicate effectively with others as well as the ability to manage conflict, handle stress, and perform under pressure. For these reasons, EI is predicted to be instrumental in leadership and workplace behavior.

3.4.4 Models Of Emotional Intelligence

There are mainly three models of emotional intelligence. They are as follows:

The Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence: Salovey and Mayer's (1990) original model described emotional intelligence as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". According to Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (2000), emotional intelligence refers to the abilities used to process information about one's own emotions and the emotions of others. In this model, there are four branches of emotional intelligence:

- 1. Emotional Perception:** the ability to register, attend to emotional messages in facial expressions, tone of voice and also in other stimuli like artwork.
- 2. Emotional Integration:** the ability to access and generate feelings which help in the facilitation of thought.
- 3. Emotional Understanding:** the ability to understand the implications of emotions i.e. how emotions change and how they can affect relationships.
- 4. Emotional Management:** the ability to regulate emotions and exercise control on the expression of emotions.

Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence: According to Bar-On (1997) "emotional intelligence is... an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". According to this model, emotional intelligence has five components: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood. Bar-On (2007) developed one of the first measures of emotional intelligence that used the term Emotion Quotient (EQ) called BarOn Eq-i.

Competency Model: Accordingly to Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence consists of “abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations: to control impulse and delay gratification: to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize, and to hope”. Goleman (1995, 1998) proposed five dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- Self awareness
- Self regulation
- Self motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

The Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) is a multi-rater instrument for measuring emotional intelligence. The ECI incorporates 20 competencies, organized into four domains: Self- Awareness, Social-Awareness, Self Management, and Social Skills.

3.4.5 Emotional intelligence: An Indian view

The models of emotional intelligence discussed before were all developed in Western countries. It is important to understand emotional intelligence with respect to the Indian culture. The following is a brief view of the researches done on the understanding and measurement of emotional intelligence in India:

Chaddha (2001) evaluated the Prime Ministers of India on the basis of emotional intelligence attributes and cognitive behavioral, social and psychological attributes. He reported that those Prime Ministers who had high emotional intelligence were more successful and popular among people in comparison to those Prime Minister who did not have high emotional intelligence. Singh (2004) found that emotional intelligence was positively correlated with organizational commitment, emotional expression and quality of life. However, Manasi (2002) on the basis of her studies concluded that even in the absence of emotional intelligence managers were able to take the required decisions if the work profile was of a more technical nature.

3.4.6 Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is emerging as an important construct in psychology. The fields in psychology influenced by the emotional intelligence model is very large including developmental, educational, clinical, counseling, social, industrial and organizational psychology. Emotional intelligence offers a strong positive model for psychology. It has implications for physical and mental health care and for effective interventions in education, businesses and organizations.

The rise in competition has resulted in stress and depression. The World Health Organization has predicted that depression will be the second highest cause of death in the next 10 years. It has also been found that two-thirds of stress-related problems emerge due to abusive, and unsatisfying relationships.

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an important construct in today's world. It not only leads to positive outcomes like academic achievement and organizational productivity, it is also related to lower levels of stress and depression. Needless to say, the concept of emotional intelligence has come as a breath of fresh air in the area of psychology. Not only does it challenge the earlier biased notions about emotions, but by demonstrating the importance of emotions in human life it has given emotions their due. The modern day world is beset with rapid social, cultural and emotional upheavals, cut throat competition, stress and insecurities. In such a challenging emotional climate, emotional intelligence is a psychological strength which can guide and motivate individuals to deal with as well as benefit from his/her emotions. Increased understanding of emotional intelligence will provide a broader range of psychological mechanisms that will enable individuals to flourish in their lives. Therefore, emotional intelligence should not just be treated as a mere concept in the matter of academic pursuit but be engaged as a powerful strength in the attainment of social and psychological well being.

UNIT IV: POSITIVE COGNITIVE STATES & PROCESSES

4.1 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the core aspect of Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as 'the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations'. Self-efficacy involves the belief that one can effectively perform certain actions. Our efficacy beliefs determine our expectations about the outcomes of our actions and this in turn determines our behavioral performance.

People's beliefs in their capabilities to obtain desired outcomes are very important as they determine the types of behaviors people will undertake and how much efforts they will put in. A related construct is Perceived Self-Efficacy which is the belief that one can perform difficult tasks and cope with failures. Perceived self-efficacy helps in setting of goals, putting of effort, persistence and recovery from failures.

Self-efficacy is usually treated as domain specific. But recently some researchers have also conceptualized a generalized sense of self-efficacy across a wide range of situations. There is a positive relationship between general self-efficacy and specific self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1995), individuals possess a self-system through which they exercise control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The self-system is made up of cognitive and affective structures which are involved in perceiving, regulating, and evaluating behavior. Self-efficacy makes a difference in people's feelings, thoughts and action. Low self-efficacy is related with depression, and anxiety while high self-efficacy leads to accomplishments, reduces stress, and enhances well-being.

A person with strong self-efficacy beliefs is able to lead a more self-determined life; consider difficult tasks as challenges and not as threats. Self-efficacy influences the level of stress one experiences while dealing with difficult circumstances. It also determines one's level of accomplishments; level of effort and whether one's thoughts are positive or negative.

4.1.1 Sources of self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1997), there are four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs:

Mastery experiences: Mastery experiences are the most effective way of creating a high level of efficacy. Successes help in building strong self-efficacy beliefs whereas failures undermine it. High self-efficacy beliefs come from past experiences of success.

Vicarious experiences: Self-efficacy beliefs also develop by learning from the experiences of other people. Exposure to successful role models helps in enhancing self-efficacy. Competent models display effective skills through their behavior. Perceived similarity to the models influences the effect of modeling on self-efficacy. If the assumed similarity is more, the more influence the models' successes and failures will have on the person. When people observe the successes of others it enhances their self-efficacy beliefs required for attaining success.

Verbal persuasion: Another way of strengthening self-efficacy beliefs is through verbal persuasion. A person who is persuaded that he/she possesses the capabilities required to perform given tasks is more likely to put in greater effort as compared to one who has self-doubts. Social persuasion motivates people to try hard to succeed in the task. A person's self-efficacy is increased when he/she is encouraged by others that he/she is capable of successfully completing a task. Guidance from others helps in correcting one's performance.

Physiological/emotional states: Emotional arousal also influences self-efficacy. High negative emotional arousal may interfere with performance, whereas positive emotional arousal can enhance performance. Mood also affects people's judgments of their self-efficacy. Positive mood enhances self- efficacy, whereas negative mood diminishes it.

Imaginal Experiences: Apart from the four sources mentioned above, Maddux (1995) introduced imaginal experiences as another source of self-efficacy. He suggested that self-efficacy beliefs can be developed by imagining oneself behaving in hypothetical situations. These images may be derived from actual or vicarious experiences. They may also be developed by verbal persuasion in systematic desensitization and covert modeling. Imaginal modeling has been used successfully in interventions to enhance assertive behaviors (Kazdin, 1979).

4.1.2 Efficacy-activated processes

Self-efficacy beliefs affect functioning through four major psychological processes (Bandura, 1992). They are as follows:

Cognitive Processes: Most human behavior is determined by one's cognitions like thinking, decision making reasoning etc. Setting goals for oneself is influenced by how one appraises his/her capabilities. People with strong self-efficacy beliefs set higher goal challenges for themselves and are more committed to achieving them. Self-efficacy beliefs also influence the expectations of people. People with strong self-efficacy beliefs, visualize success scenarios while those with low self-efficacy visualize failure scenarios. Remaining task oriented during stressful situations is also affected by self-efficacy beliefs.

Motivational Processes: Self-efficacy beliefs help in regulating one's motivation. People form beliefs about what they can do. There are three different forms of cognitive motivators: causal attributions, outcome expectancies, and goals and self-efficacy beliefs play a role in each of these. Causal attributions affect motivation, and performance through self-efficacy beliefs. In expectancy-value theory, motivation is regulated by the expectation that a certain action will lead to certain outcomes. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the goals people set for themselves and the effort invested.

Affective Processes: People's beliefs in their coping capabilities influences how much stress they may experience. Self-efficacy to exercise control over stressful situations plays an important role in anxiety arousal. Stronger the self-efficacy beliefs about self-regulation, the more successful the person is in taking up health promoting behaviors.

Selection Processes: Self-efficacy beliefs influence one's life course by affecting the types of activities and environments people select for themselves. Any factor that affects choice behaviors has a huge impact on personal development. This is because the person will choose activities and environments which further enhance his development. In career choice and development too self-efficacy beliefs influence the course of life through the choices that one makes. When self-efficacy is high, the range of career options a person considers becomes high and it leads to greater interest in career options. Due to this there is better preparation for the attainment of the goal thereby leading to success.

4.1.3 Development of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Self-efficacy beliefs start developing in early childhood as children go through various types of experiences. The growth of self-efficacy continues to evolve throughout life. According to

Bandura (1967, 2001), there is a triadic reciprocal causal relationship between personal, behavioral and environmental factors. Cultural factors and power structure also play a very important role in developing self-efficacy beliefs.

The initial basis for developing a sense of efficacy is provided by the exploratory experiences of the child. Children who are successful in controlling environmental events are more competent in learning new efficacious responses. The role of family is very important role in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Families differ in their capital: financial or material, human or non-material, and social resources (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Families with greater capital provide richer experiences which further enhance children's efficacy beliefs. Parents, who create opportunities for efficacious actions, help in the social and cognitive development of their children.

Peers act as models of self-efficacy. A great amount of social learning occurs among peers. One can judge one's self-efficacy beliefs by comparing with one's peers. Peer influence operates greatly through peer networks which are large group of peers with whom the adolescent associates (Schunk & Meece, 2005).

The school plays an important role in the development of the child's cognitive competencies. Children acquire knowledge and problem-solving skills at school. Adolescence is often characterized as a period of crisis and the ease with which one makes the transition from childhood to adulthood depends on self-efficacy beliefs.

During adulthood people have to cope with many challenges emerging from marital relationship, parenthood, and careers. Adults with a high level of self-efficacy know how to strike a balance between different relationships and between relationships and career. Those with a low level of self-efficacy are highly vulnerable to stress and depression since they are unable to cope with these challenges. Major life changes occur in later years due to retirement, loss of friends or spouse and diminishing physical and cognitive capabilities. Low self-efficacy leads to vulnerability to stress and depression in old age.

4.1.4 Importance of Self-efficacy

The importance of self-efficacy beliefs has been proved in various settings. Many recent researches have shown a relationship between self-efficacy and other outcome-related behaviors.

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Adjustment: General self-efficacy has been found to be negatively correlated with negative affect, anxiety, depression, anger, stress, and physical symptoms. Self-efficacy beliefs have also been found to be negatively related to clinical problems like phobias and addiction.

High self-efficacy has been found to be related to the management of stress, higher self-esteem, better well-being, and better physical health. It also helps in overcoming substance abuse problems and eating disorders.

Self-Efficacy and Physical Health: Self-efficacy helps in explaining why people adopt healthy or unhealthy behaviors. Beliefs about self-efficacy influence health in many ways: First, self-efficacy beliefs influence whether a person will adopt healthy behaviours, curb unhealthy behaviours, and maintain behavioural changes during difficulties. All the major theories of health behaviour include self-efficacy as a key component. Self-efficacy beliefs also influence biological processes that play a role in health and disease.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation: Self-efficacy helps in understanding how we guide our own behavior in the pursuit of our goals. Self-efficacy beliefs influence the goals we set, our choices of goal-directed activities, level of effort, and the effectiveness of problem solving and decision making.

Self-Efficacy and psychotherapy: Self-efficacy theory helps in understanding how to increase a person's self-efficacy to overcome problematic situations. Self-efficacy theory suggests that psychotherapeutic interventions should also help in developing efficacy for successful problem solving. These strategies are based on the four sources of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and academic performance: In the academic domain self-efficacy has been found to be related to technological/computer literacy, writing; choice of academic major, teacher preparation, and mathematics learning. Students with strong self-efficacy beliefs usually challenge themselves with difficult tasks. These students put in a lot of effort to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to controllable things. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and are more likely to achieve their personal goals. Self-efficacy plays a vital role in educational attainment. Self-efficacy has powerful effects on learning. General self-efficacy is also positively related to need for achievement.

Self-efficacy and work performance: The role of self-efficacy in improved performance at work is immense. Bandura (1986) observed the relationship of self-efficacy with increased effort and

motivation. Martinko and Gardner (1982) found that low self-efficacy is associated with learned helplessness. Self-efficacy also predicts the range of career options considered, occupational interests and personal effectiveness as well as entrepreneurial activity. Efficacy beliefs influence employees' motivation and performance in organizations.

4.2 Optimism

Optimism and pessimism refer to the positive and negative predictions that people make regarding their future. Some people look usually on the bright side of events, while others look on the dark side.

Therefore, it can be said that optimists expect good things to happen to them while pessimists expect bad things to happen to them. Many studies have provided evidence for the optimistic bias.

Optimism has been linked to psychological and physical well-being. The study of optimism has contributed a lot to what we understand about optimism today.

There are several other constructs that are similar or related to optimism and they pose a methodological issue. Two of these concepts are hope and self-efficacy. People with high self-efficacy expectancies believe that their personal efforts determine the outcome of events. Whereas self-efficacy looks at self as a causal agent, optimism takes a broader view of the potential causes at work.

Hope reflects the will as well as the ways. The confidence aspect in hope is similar to optimism however there is more emphasis on personal agency.

Pessimism has been found to resemble the construct of neuroticism. Neuroticism involves a tendency to worry, and experience unpleasant emotions. Therefore, it can be said that a sense of pessimism is a part of neuroticism.

Optimism and pessimism relate to people's expectations for the future. Due to this they are linked to the expectancy-value theories of motivation. Expectancy-value theories assume that behavior is directed on the pursuit of goals. When a goal is important to someone, the greater is its value. Expectancy is a sense of confidence or doubt about whether goal can be attained or not.

Expectancy-based theories generally suggest that the best prediction of behavior can be made when the level of the expectancy fits that of the behavior being predicted. When confronting a challenge, optimists are more confident whereas pessimists are more doubtful. This

has implications in terms of differences in taking health risks, taking precautions, and being persistent in one's efforts to overcome health threats as well as differences in coping responses.

4.2.1 Explanatory styles

People have explanatory styles which influence the way they explain various life events. According to the theory behind explanatory style, optimism and pessimism are defined by unstable and specific versus stable and global patterns of explanation for negative outcomes. Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale (1978) applied the attribution theory. This approach believes that people's explanatory style determines how they explain an event. This influences their expectation of future events.

Explanatory style consists of three dimensions: internal/external; stable/unstable and global/specific. According to this model, if the person considers bad events as internal, stable and global they have a pessimistic explanatory style. However, optimistic explanatory style explains the causes of negative events as external, unstable and specific.

When faced with a challenge, optimists are more confident whereas pessimists remain doubtful.

4.2.2 Unrealistic and realistic optimism

Unrealistic optimism (Weinstein, 1989) describes the mismatch between dispositional optimism and actual probability of occurrence of events. It refers to the discrepancy between the inevitability of adverse circumstances and the anticipation of experiencing life as good. Optimistic bias or unrealistic optimism has been demonstrated across a wide variety of positive and negative events.

Realistic optimism is defined by Sneider (2001) as the 'tendency to maintain a positive outlook within the constraints of the available measurable phenomena situated in the physical and social world'. Realistic optimists believe they have more control over themselves, their lives and their destinies. A realistic optimist is defined as someone who looks on the bright side of life but at the same time has an understanding of reality.

The main difference is between believing that one will succeed, and believing that one will succeed easily. This is the difference between being a realistic optimist and an unrealistic optimist.

4.2.3 Importance of optimism

Optimism has been linked to positive mood, academic, and occupational success and good health. Pessimism has been found to be related to depression, failure, social isolation, mortality etc.

4.2.4 Optimism and Subjective Well-Being

Since optimists are people who expect to have positive outcomes, they usually experience positive feelings. Pessimists expect negative outcomes and therefore they usually have negative feelings of anxiety, guilt, anger etc.

Seligman (1998) reported that optimistic people experience less depression and increased enjoyment in social interactions. Several studies have reported a strong relation between an optimistic outlook about the future and happiness.

4.2.5 Optimism, Pessimism, and Coping

Optimists and pessimists have been found to use different coping methods. Optimists use more problem-centered coping than pessimists and a variety of emotion-focused coping techniques as well. Hence, it can be said that optimists have a coping advantage over pessimists. Thus, optimists appear generally to use approach oriented coping strategies, and pessimists tend to use avoidant coping strategies.

In the workplace, optimists use more problem-focused coping than do pessimists like self-control and directed problem solving (Strutton & Lumpkin, 1993). Pessimists use more emotion-focused coping such as escapism, and using social support. In studies of AIDS patients too, optimism has been found to be related to active coping strategies.

4.2.6 Optimism and Health Behaviors

Optimistic people are healthier and happier. They cope better with stress using more effective coping strategies. They form better social support networks around themselves. They have healthier lifestyles which prevent them from developing illness. If they develop illness they adhere to medical advice and have healthier lifestyle and behavior patterns. Many studies show that optimists report more health promoting behaviors than pessimists.

The route by which optimism might be associated with better health is through effects on the immune system. It has also been found that optimists suffer fewer life traumas, which make them vulnerable to illness and have better social support.

In spite of the various benefits of optimism mentioned above, several theorists have suggested that in some situations optimism may be potentially damaging. Optimists may fail to protect themselves against threats. Another possibility is that the optimist's worldview might be more vulnerable to a traumatic event than that of a pessimist.

4.2.7 Optimism and work performance

When hiring people for jobs three characteristics must be considered: aptitude, motivation and optimism. Working with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Seligman (1995) studied optimism in insurance agents. He found that life insurance agents were highly optimistic and that the optimists performed better than pessimists.

4.2.8 Changing Pessimism to Optimism

Researches with twins suggest that optimism is subject to genetic influence (Plomin et al., 1992). Optimism relates both to neuroticism and to extraversion, both of which are known to be genetically influenced. An important factor in the development of optimism or pessimism is early childhood experience. Insecurity of adult attachment is related to pessimism.

One of the most straightforward ways for changing pessimism to optimism is through cognitive-behavioral therapies. These are applied to problems such as depression and anxiety. The goal of the cognitive therapies is to make the cognitions more positive thereby reducing distress.

The approaches for changing pessimistic thinking to optimistic are all built on the same principles of “ABCDE” (Seligman, 1992).

A - Adverse event or situation- Identifying adverse situations that one routinely faces and writing down the objective descriptions of them.

B- Beliefs about that event- Learning to hear and record the beliefs about those events which come to mind.

C - Consequences of those beliefs- Feeling the consequences of those beliefs and writing them down in terms of emotions and what one did.

D- Disputation and Distraction - Disputing those beliefs or distracting oneself.

E – Energization- Finally, noticing what happens to one’s energy and willingness to act when one disputes the negative beliefs.

Another method for enhancing optimism is personal efficacy training. The focus of such training is on increasing specific kinds of competence by the use of assertiveness training or social skills training. Training in specific areas like problem solving, decision making etc can also improve the level of optimism in a person.

Another method which is frequently used is Instructional Counseling for optimism. In this method, cognitive techniques are used for teaching optimistic beliefs. Another technique which can be used is the ‘What if’ technique. Negative self-talk creates anxiety and reduces happiness. By associating ‘What If’ with positive hopeful outcomes we can experience calm. Relaxation techniques can also be employed.

When faced with adverse situations, one must calm down and try to have positive and optimistic thoughts. To conclude, optimism and pessimism influence how people perceive and explain events in their lives. They influence people’s subjective experiences and actions when they try to deal with problems. However, being optimistic or pessimistic has implications for achievement, mental and physical health, coping and well-being.

4.3 Hope:

According to Snyder et al. (1991) hope is a human strength manifested in our perceived capacities to clearly conceptualize goals (goals thinking), develop strategies to reach those goals

(pathways thinking), and initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking).

Hope is conceptualized as a *dynamic cognitive motivational system*. According to this conceptualization, emotions follow cognitions and not the other way round. Hope leads to pursuit of *learning goals* and learning goals are positively related to success.

4.3.1 Hope theory

Hope theory has the following major components: goals, pathway thoughts, agency thoughts and barriers.

Goals: Goals are the targets of mental action sequences and are the cognitive component in hope theory. Goals provide direction for hopeful thinking.

Pathways Thinking: Pathway thoughts refer to the routes we take to achieve our goals and the perceived ability to produce these routes.

Agency Thinking: This is the motivational component in hope theory. Agentic thinking reflects the self-referential thoughts regarding moving along a pathway as well as continuing to progress along that pathway.

Barriers: Barriers block the attainment of our goals. The individual then has to make a choice to either give up or use pathway thoughts to create new routes.

Snyder (2000) suggests that hope develops over the course of infancy, childhood and adolescence. Snyder proposes that there are no hereditary contributions to hope and it is a learned cognitive set. The basic cause and effect thinking contained in pathways thinking is acquired from parents and others. Snyder also proposes that strong attachment to caregivers is crucial for the development of hope. Traumas during the life course contribute to the lessening of hope.

4.3.2 Importance of Hope

Academic achievement: Hope is significantly related to academic achievement. Hopeful students are more confident of finding various pathways to reach desired goals, and the motivations to pursue those goals. Hence, low-hope students can benefit by interventions to raise their hopeful thinking.

Hope is positively associated with perceived competence. High-hope students are more optimistic, and perceive themselves as being capable of solving problems. Hope is related to positively with self-worth, life satisfaction and wellbeing.

Health: Hope predicts physical and mental health, subjective wellbeing, effective coping and healthy behaviors. People with higher levels of hope engage in more preventative behaviors like healthy diet and physical exercise. Higher hope is also related to benefits in dealing with injuries and disabilities.

Athletics: Higher hope has been positively related to superior athletic performances. Sports psychologists and coaches can use hope theory to enhance the performance of athletes.

Psychological Adjustment: Hope is related positively with positive affect and thoughts and negatively with negative affect and thoughts.

High-hope individuals also are less likely to use avoidance coping style. When people with high hope face an obstacle in reaching a goal, they try to find alternative goals. Higher levels of hope are related to more perceived social support, and more social competence.

Psychotherapy: Hope theory provides a framework for understanding the shared processes for helping people in psychotherapy. McNeal (1998) conducted a study of children and adolescents' hope before and after they had received psychological treatment in a residential setting. He found that significantly higher levels of hope were developed during that period. Hope theory has been used to develop successful individual and group interventions especially in depression.

4.3.4 Hope therapy

Hope therapy is derived from Snyder's hope theory and ideas drawn from cognitive-behavior therapy and narrative therapy. It aims to help clients formulate clear goals and produce various pathways to attain these goals. It also aims to enable clients to motivate themselves to pursue their goals and consider obstacles as challenges to be mastered. Hope therapy and attributional retraining help individuals or groups develop optimism and hope-driven problem-solving strategies.

4.4 Wisdom

Wisdom refers to the ability to take stock of life in broad terms. It is the coordination of information about different aspects of life to improve well-being. It also allows one to listen to others, to evaluate what they say, and offer good advice.

Wisdom involves exceptional personal and interpersonal competence like listening, giving advice and is used for the well-being of self and others (Baltes and Staudinger, 2000). Explicit theories of wisdom define wisdom as a stage of personality development (Erikson et al., 1986); a stage of cognitive development (Basseches, 1984); or a high level of skill development involving both personality and cognitive processes (Baltes and Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 2000).

4.4.1 Wisdom as the final stage of personality development: Integrity v despair

Erik Erikson, has discussed wisdom within the context of his lifecycle model of personality development (Erikson et al., 1986). In later adulthood the crisis faced is integrity versus despair. When this crisis is resolved in favour of integrity it leads to wisdom. People are more likely to develop wisdom if they have developed virtues of hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love and care in resolving psychosocial dilemmas encountered at earlier stages of the lifecycle. According to Erikson, wisdom is accepting imperfection in one's self, one's parents and one's life. In this theory, wisdom is considered to be the final stage of personality development.

4.4.2 Wisdom as the final stage of cognitive development

Riegel (1973) has suggested that in late adolescence (after people have passed through Piaget's (1976) four stages of cognitive development) they enter the stage of dialectical operations. According to Basseches (1984) the use of dialectical thinking to solve complex human problems in adulthood is an important way of understanding wisdom.

4.4.3 Wisdom as expert knowledge

According to Baltes and Staudinger (2000) wisdom involves both personality and cognitive processes. They define wisdom as an expert knowledge system regarding the pragmatics of life that relates mind and virtue. This includes knowledge and judgements about the meaning of life and how to pursue excellence, and well-being of oneself and others.

4.4.4 Wisdom as a Topic of Scientific Discourse about the Good Life

Wisdom has been studied in philosophy and religion for thousands of years and now one can say that wisdom is becoming a center of trans-disciplinary discourse.

Baltes and Staudinger (2000) have developed five criteria to evaluate the quality of a wise judgement or behavior:

- Wisdom entails a rich store of declarative knowledge, i.e. knowing facts about development, and the contextual nature of the human condition.
- Wisdom involves a rich repertoire of procedural knowledge, i.e. knowledge about how to perform certain skills and routines.
- Wisdom involves an appreciation of the many themes and contexts of life such as the self, family, peer group etc.
- Wisdom entails a relativism of values and life priorities, tolerance for differences in values held by individuals and society in the service of the common good.
- Wisdom entails a recognition and management of uncertainty and a tolerance for ambiguity.

Distinctions are made between implicit and explicit theories of wisdom (Sternberg, 2000). Implicit theoretical approaches to wisdom discuss the folk conceptions regarding the nature of wisdom. In contrast, theories of wisdom developed by psychologists may be called as explicit theoretical approaches.

4.4.5 Implicit Theories

Implicit theories of wisdom, consists of psychological research associated with folk-psychological or common-sense approaches (Clayton & Birren, 1980). Implicit theories refer to the beliefs or mental representations of people regarding wisdom as well as the characteristics of wise people. The conceptions include cognitive, social, motivational, and emotional components. The **cognitive components** include strong intellectual abilities, knowledge and experience regarding the human condition, and the practical application of theoretical knowledge. Another basic component refers to reflective judgment based on knowledge about the world and the self, openness to new experiences, and the ability to learn from mistakes. **Socioemotional components** include good social skills. The **motivational component** refers to the good intentions that usually are associated with wisdom.

There are mainly five conclusions about the concept of wisdom:

- (a) Carries specific meaning that is widely shared.
- (b) Exceptional level of human functioning.
- (c) Coordinated and balanced inter- play of intellectual, affective, and motivational aspects.
- (d) High degree of personal and interpersonal competence.
- (e) Involves good intentions and is used for the well-being of oneself and others.

Baltes (1993, 1999) identified seven properties of wisdom:

- (a) Superior level of knowledge, judgment, and advice
- (b) Addresses important questions and strategies about the meaning of life
- (c) Includes knowledge about the limits of knowledge and the uncertainties of the world
- (d) Constitutes knowledge with extraordinary scope, depth, measure, and balance
- (e) Involves a perfect synergy of mind and character, and of knowledge and virtues

- (f) Represents knowledge used for the well-being of oneself and of others
- (g) Although difficult to achieve, is easily recognized when manifested.

4.4.6 Explicit Theories

The second type of wisdom theories are explicit psychological theories which focus on cognitive and behavioral expressions of wisdom and the processes involved in the interplay of cognition and behavior. Work on explicit psychological conceptions of wisdom can be divided roughly into three groups:

- (a) Wisdom as a personal characteristic or a personality disposition (e.g., Erikson, 1959)
- (b) Conceptualization of wisdom in the neo-Piagetian tradition of postformal and dialectical thinking
- (c) Conceptualization of wisdom as an expert system as advocated in the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm.

4.4.7 Sternberg's balance theory of wisdom

Sternberg's (2000) balance theory of wisdom derives from his triarchic theory of intelligence. According to Sternberg's (1997) triarchic theory of intelligence, effective adaptation to the environment or successful use of intelligence, involves combining analytic intelligence with practical intelligence and creative intelligence.

Analytic intelligence: information-processing skills that guide intelligent behavior.

Practical intelligence: skills required to create an optimal fit between one's skills and the external environment.

Creative intelligence: ability to capitalize upon experience to process novel information.

According to balance theory, wisdom is the application of practical intelligence to solve problems in a way that achieves a common good keeping in mind ethical values. Sternberg emphasizes the role of balance. A factor-analytic study was conducted by Staudinger, Sowarka, et al. (1997) in which participants rated 131 attributes regarding the degree to which each represents the notion of an ideally wise person. The dimensions identified were (a) exceptional knowledge concerning the acquisition of wisdom; (b) exceptional knowledge

concerning its application; (c) exceptional knowledge about contextual and temporal variations of life; and (d) person-related competencies.

Wisdom involves applying knowledge to solve problems in a way that achieves a balance among multiple interests:

- *intrapersonal interests*
- *interpersonal interests*
- *extrapersonal interests* (things that would be good for everyone affected by the problem within society).

Wisdom also involves applying tacit knowledge to solve problems in a way that achieves a balance among multiple types of responses to environmental contexts. These responses include:

- *adapting to the current social environment*
- *shaping the current social environment to adapt*
- *selecting a new social environment.*

4.5 Courage:

Courage is a desirable universal value. But to the surprise, this so valued quality hasn't received much attention despite being talked about since ages. This construct has lately received attention within the realm of Psychology with the advent of positive psychology. However, it still hasn't got a stand as the other positive psychology variables like hope and optimism have got.

Courage is valued across cultures and nations. Courage needs fearlessness, awareness and active coping. Courage coaching starts early in childhood when fairy tales are narrated to children and this attribute is continuously worked and built upon till adulthood. Courage is usually inculcated through inspirational messages and stories. It is a value that provides an individual with great respect and admiration.

The concept still lacks consensus amongst scholars over its definition. There is a paucity of research done on this construct which could be attributed to the fact that there are difficulties in establishing clear definitions of this construct. However, following are a few definitions of courage:-

Woodard (2004) defined courage as *“the ability to act for a meaningful (noble, good or practical) cause, despite experiencing the fear associated with perceived threat exceeding the available resources.”*

A more recent definition is given by Snyder (2005) wherein courage is defined as *“responding to extraordinary times with behaviours that seem natural and called for in those circumstances. It is only later, when removed from courage- eliciting events, that the protagonist and others view the behaviours as particularly worthy of the label courageous. This view of courage obviously gives greater weight to situational than to personal factors and suggests that most people are capable of courage if faced with the appropriate circumstances.”*

Shelp (1984) defined it as, *“courage is the disposition to voluntarily act, perhaps fearfully, in dangerous circumstances, where the relevant risks are reasonably appraised, in an effort to obtain or preserve some perceived good for one self others recognizing that the desired perceived good may not be realized”* (p. 354).

Another definition given by Cicero (as summarized by Houser, 2002) which sees courage as *(1) magnificence, the planning and execution of great and expansive projects by putting forth ample and splendid effort of mind; (2) confidence, that through which, on great and honourable projects, the mind self-confidently collects itself with sure hope; (3) patience, the voluntary and lengthy endurance of arduous and difficult things, whether the case be honourable or useful, and (4) perseverance, ongoing persistence in a well-considered plan.* (pp. 305)

Cicero’s definition covers many desirable character traits and values such as confidence, magnificence, patience and perseverance. All these are important to exhibit courage. Courage involves not only physical strength, endurance but also the capacity to innovate and have the mental stamina to be able to withstand the pressure. Basically, courage is the capacity of an individual to be able to persevere under pressure. How an individual is able to deal and stand upfront when he/she faces situations that are difficult to sail through. This capacity of courage is what lets people sail through turbulent times and reach the desired goal.

4.6 Components of Courage

Rate, Clarke, Lindsay and Strenberg identified components of courage as intentionality, deliberation, personal risk to the actor, noble/good act, and perhaps fear. Currently, there appears

to be a consensus that courage requires the element of *intentionality*. The actor must have an awareness and understanding of the presented occasion for courageous action, and voluntarily decide to act. It also requires a *worthy goal*, deemed so by merit of that goal's moral, noble, or otherwise good value, typically from the perspective of the actor. Finally, the actor must perceive the occasion for courage as *potentially personally threatening* and the *outcome must not be certain*. There is no courage where personal safety is assured, but it is here that a secondary or parallel role of fear becomes relevant. Personal risk and uncertainty may or may not induce the emotional response of fear, depending on factors such as training, familiarity, and confidence. While this added emotion would be expected to emerge from personal threat and uncertain outcome, some authors believe that acting under these conditioned constitutes courage with or without the presence of fear (Pury & Woodard, 2009).

Shelp (1984) indicated four components of courage: (1) free choice to accept or not to accept the consequences of acting, (2) risk or danger, (3) a worthy end, and (4) uncertainty of outcome.

4.7 Types of Courage

Courage can be bifurcated into many types. However, the most common division has been with respect to moral courage and physical courage. O'Byrne, Lopez and Peterson (2000) elaborated upon three types of courage as physical, moral and vital.

- Physical Courage usually involves taking risk taking. It allows us to risk discomfort, injury and pain. An example would be the courage that a fire-fighter has or the courage to take on with your enemy.
- Moral courage is the expression of standing up for moral good against all odds. It involves doing the right thing even if it involves high amount of inconvenience or discomfort to present life circumstances. Choosing between alternatives and making good decisions that are morally correct and are in tandem with our ideals is what reflects moral courage. Examples of some people who showed immense moral courage and chose to do things in the right way are Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King. Moral courage involves actions towards preservation of justice and service for the

common good. John F. Kennedy in his compilation “Profiles in Courage” gave more attention to moral courage than to physical courage. Moral courage also can be shown when we act with sensitivities towards people that are underprivileged economically, socially or physically.

- Vital courage was coined by Finfgeld before which it was referred to as health/ change. It is the capacity to be able to withstand and be resilient in the face of physical illnesses. Vital courage is only shown when one is faced with disabilities and diseases, especially chronic diseases that are there to stay. How an individual fights and takes these debilitating conditions as a part of life and learn to be optimistic represents vital courage. Vital courage is also shown by family, friends and hospital care providers like nurses and doctors who are treating patients with illnesses.

Another classification over the types of courage was given by Peterson and Seligman (2004) in their Values in Action (VIA) Classification that conceptualized courage as a core human virtue comprised of such strengths as **valour** (taking physical, intellectual and emotional stances in the face of danger), **authenticity** (representing oneself to others and the self in a sincere fashion), **enthusiasm/ zest** (thriving/ having a sense of vitality in a challenging situation), and **industry/ perseverance** (undertaking tasks and challenges and finishing them) (Snyder & Lopez, 2007).

Woodard and Pury found individual differences in courage based on a combination of the context and the goal of action. The four contexts includes: **work courage**, courageous actions taken in the context of one’s career or other major personal goal; **belief-based courage**, the courage to stand up for one’s religious or political beliefs; **social courage**, the courage to take a moral stand for specific others despite social pressure; and **family courage**, or courageous actions in the context of familial or other close relationships (Woodard & Pury, 2009).

4.8 Mindfulness:

Mindfulness, deep-rooted in the realms of Buddhism, is being given its due regard since its resurgence in the recent times. The topic is not confined only to the spiritual and academic exploration but also has become part of popular imagination. Mindfulness is gift of Indian

Buddhist tradition and the *Pali* language espoused by them. The *Pali* word for ‘mindfulness’ is *sati*, also meaning ‘retention’ and ‘alertness’. Mindfulness is the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one’s attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment (Zgierska, 2009). In layman language, *mindfulness* is living in the present moment without being preoccupied by thoughts of the past or the future. It is a quintessential component of Buddhist practices of meditation, also including *vipassana* (insight into reality), *anapanasati* (mindfulness of breathing) and *satipatthana* (foundation for mindfulness).

Mindfulness originated as a movement to invigorate compassion, peace and non-violence in the world. Gradually, its areas and degree of impact have expanded to a vast number of areas such as medical practice, psychology and research, personal well-being and awareness, improving and enhancing relationships at home and the workplace. The notion of mindfulness is mostly aimed at inculcating a sense of self and the capability to create positivity. The practice of mindfulness is now increasingly used, in the field of psychology to treat mental health disorders, such as anxiety depression and chronic disorders. Psychologists and therapists have formulated contemporary therapies, fusing mindfulness and psychology (Kabat Zinn, 1979; Teasdale & Williams, 2002).

4.8.1 Concepts of Mindfulness

Mindfulness has certain concepts, which are similar to it, in theory and practice. Some of those concepts are:

- i. **Awareness:** It is the ability to be conscious of the events, objects, surroundings or a particular situation. Awareness can be either internal or external. Being conscious at every moment is what awareness or mindfulness is about. Spiritual leaders, philosophers and psychologists have propagated awareness of the self. Duval & Wicklund (1972) postulated a theory that self-awareness based on motivational properties deriving from social feedback. It is of utmost importance to be aware about one’s choices, goals, values and beliefs. Spiritual teacher Osho believed that awareness while meditating means accepting life as it comes.
- ii. **Wakefulness:** In the context of mindfulness, wakefulness has a different meaning. It can be best described as a state of awareness, in every waking moment. (Kabat Zinn, 2012).

Wakefulness enhances our subjective well-being and heightens our contentment with our inner selves and the world.

- iii. ***Positive Evaluations:*** Inability to inculcate positive evaluations of oneself, or self-acceptance could lead to emotional difficulties. If an individual is engaging more in self-evaluation than self-acceptance, s/he is more likely to compensate for the deficits perceived in self. Someone who accepts oneself as s/he is would tend to be mindful. Carson & Langer (2006) view the acceptance of self as a mindful choice.

4.8.2 Mindlessness And Negative Evaluation

Mindlessness is a state of mind, in which the individual is neither mindful nor aware. According to Langer (2012), many have procured such mindless activities in order to escape from feeling lamentable or dejected. Practicing mindlessness tends to put one off-track in any aspect. Mindlessness practices can be identified in our daily routine: practices of body, speech and mind. Example – Flipping TV channels, trying to study with house party music blaring through music system or leaving all the lights on when leaving your apartment, etc.

As mindlessness maybe concerned with past, it can also happen in cases of pre-occupation with futuristic thoughts, i.e. fantasizing or obsessing about the future with unrealistic demands or dwelling on a pleasant memory. Inculcating positivity and mindfulness gradually in self or maybe with the help of a professional can reduce the acts of mindlessness as well.

Negative Evaluation: Self-depreciation or negatively evaluating oneself is a self-derogatory practice. Evaluating oneself with negativity would lead to difficulties like lack of self-confidence, poor academics, drug/alcohol dependence, etc.

Rigid Stereotypical Thinking: Toomey (2012) has distinguished between mindful stereotyping and mindless stereotyping. Mindless stereotyping has been characterized by holding a perceived negative stereotype, condemning any new incoming information and engaging in cognitions and behaviors favoring the in-group and being biased and discriminated towards other groups. In contrast, mindful stereotyping can be characterized by holding the belief consciously, meta-cognitively that we are part of an entire group and are open to new incoming information and are better at dealing with others

4.8.3 Achieving Mindfulness

One can achieve mindfulness through practicing mindfulness meditation, a systematic way to focus your attention. Mindfulness meditation can be practiced on your own, following instructions from an audio clip or through books. A meditation teacher can also be consulted to practice mindfulness, who could guide one during practice. Also, there are various institutes, which conduct courses on mindfulness meditation. This chapter would detail on the ways to achieving mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2012). He has listed 5 steps in achieving mindfulness in its true nature. These steps are discussed below in brief.

Entering: The beginning of mindfulness starts with inculcating awareness about one's thoughts, words, deeds and reactions. For mindfulness meditation, it is necessary to be aware of our own breathing, as our breath. Buddha's teachings find awareness of breath as an important phenomenon as it contains in itself one's capacity for wisdom and compassion. According to Kabat-Zinn (2012), awareness of breath is more concerned with our attention than merely breathing. It is about the oneness of the perceiver and the object/situation/event attended to. Mindfulness meditation shouldn't be considered 'seriously', as it is supposed to be an effortless element of our lives. It should be pursued with authentic integrity. Mindfulness is to be present in the present. Preoccupation with thoughts of past or future disrupts the process of meditation, but practice helps in this case. Entering can thus be characterized by the following:

- Awareness of thoughts and actions
- Awareness of the process of breathing
- Adjusting your daily routine
- Attention and awareness are skills that can be acquired
- Getting rid of our obsession with own self

Sustaining: The phase of *sustaining* is concerned with applying the concepts learnt in the entering phase in our daily routine. This phase integrates all sensory systems of an individual and the individual feels connected to his inner self on a deeper level. The attentiveness and awareness becomes a part of the individual's routine and ultimately, the practitioner's mind is prepared to enter a deeper level of meditation. The sustaining phase is concerned with the following::

- Being attentive and affectionate
- Meditation affects all sensory systems of the body
- Meditation makes the practitioner feel connected to self
- Tendency to question our thoughts and deeds arises
- Realization that the individual is a 'whole' in any circumstance
- Mind prepared to set into a deeper meditation

Deepening: In the deepening process, the practitioner learns that 'liberation is in the practice itself'. He employs an attitude of nonviolence and experiences empathy for others. He teaches himself to conserve the energy that would usually drain out during meditation in his beginning phase. The practitioner spreads his knowledge of mindfulness to others who would need this knowledge. The phase of deepening is characterized by the following:

- Acting and reacting appropriately
- Treating others in a non-judgmental way
- Recognizing your weaknesses and ditching them
- Feeling empathetic for others
- Able to conserve energy during meditation
- Considering life as a precious gift and enjoying every moment as it comes
- Spreading the knowledge of mindfulness

Ripening: This phase is the all-round attitudinal change of the practitioner. By reaching this phase, he has mastered how to lead his life with the 'right attitude at the right time'. He has incorporated several changes in his lifestyle, which now revolve around his meditation practice. Few of the evident characteristics of an individual in the phase of ripening are:

- Non-judgmental
- Trustworthy
- Non-Striving
- Accepting Self and Others
- Letting go of the Past

Practicing: After an individual has mastered mindfulness meditation, he practices it ‘moment by moment’. He becomes mindful of his eating habits, breathing, body, mind and emotions. He has now contemplated mindfulness as Pure Awareness.

4.8.4 Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is known to have several advantages to one’s psychological, emotional and physical well-being. Some of these benefits are mentioned below:

Inter-connectivity of the Mind and the Body: Mindfulness activates the connection of mind and the body. It develops the inter-connectedness of all systems, organs and cells. This integration makes us more consciously aware of our inner selves. The connection with our inner selves helps us be more socially connected with others as well.

Healing: Mindfulness not only enables us to achieve physical relaxation but also the ability to get rid of our fears. Moments of stillness during meditating brings along a sense of oneness – that we are already connected with self and spirit. Believing in the power of “now” allows us to be completely engaged in the present moment, without being preoccupied by thoughts of the past or the future. This belief enables one to realize that these are the physical conditions that make us suffer, and we are capable of coming to terms with the situation and transforming suffering into well-being.

Attunement of the Mind: Practicing mindfulness and complete awareness stimulates emotional circuits in the brain, which further bring along several advantages, such as increase in levels of well-being, happiness, resilience and a great improvement in cardiac functions and the immune system (Siegel, 2007). Mindfulness seems to transform functioning of the brain, thus aiding in a greater emotional balance (Innen & Flynn, 2008).

Relaxation: Though relaxation is not an objective of mindfulness, but it is surely one of its many positive outcomes. Through relaxation individuals suffering from high amounts of stress and burnout can relieve oneself of stress and other negative experiences. Such relaxation based mindfulness helps in being calm and relaxed.

Improving Productivity Levels: Occupational and organizational stress directly affects an individual’s productivity levels. A distressed and fatigued employee is someone who works

mindlessly. By practicing mindfulness, the employee would be able to manage his stress levels, making him/her a healthier person and easier to manage work stress. The technique of mindfulness, when applied by the employers of an organization, will improve their relations with the employees and will prove to be beneficial to the organization as well.

A Compassionate Mind: Mindfulness meditation can train the practitioner's mind to inculcate reactions to most events with positivity. The alterations in emotional circuits of the brain after practicing mindfulness suggests increase in happiness, compassion and optimism.

Better Relationships: Intrapersonal relationships definitely benefit from practicing mindfulness, but recent studies have shown positive outcomes even in cases of interpersonal relationships. In a study carried out at University of North Carolina (2004) on relatively happy, non-distressed couples analyzed that couples who practiced mindfulness noticed significant improvement in their relationship. Inadequate and inefficient communication in relationships is bound to increase emotional pain between couples. Suppressing one's feeling and emotions toward his/her partner doesn't help. Mindfulness training for couples is the most appropriate solution for cases of conflicts, anger outbursts or even divorce.

Better Societies: The prime objective of the mindfulness movement is to create better societies. Wars and drugs don't make up for a better society. Mindfulness when applied effectively and efficiently by all would create a society with positivity and compassion in bold letters. The ease and benefits of practicing mindfulness can help people from any cultural background, age or interest group.

4.8.5 Clinical implications of mindfulness

Apart from the practical and general domains of life, mindfulness has been found effective in treatment of various clinical problems. According to Didonna (2009) major clinical implications of mindfulness can be categorized into following four categories:

- *Increased "living in the moment" time:* Mindfulness can be an important technique to avoid the ruminations of the past, or sometime it helps us by cutting our contact with the past. In most of the clinical problems like depression or obsessive disorders it is the inability and tendency of the patient to dwell in the past that proves a major hurdle to therapy. According to Jain et al. (2007) participation in mindfulness training can

effectively reduce a person's habit of living in the negativities of past, and develop a positive attitude. Mindfulness, if practiced properly, helps individual to attain clarity of thought and helps in focusing more on the current things, thus enhancing the quality and enhanced perception of current time.

- *Increased positive affect:* Negative emotions are the major cause of many clinical problems. Getting hold of negative emotions and not letting it go drains a person of constructive energies leaving him further vulnerable for negative and destructive thought processes. Barhofer et al. (2007) studied 22 patients with acute suicidal tendencies. They found that after undergoing a session of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy the level of positive affect among the patients improved as measured by the EEG activity.
- *Reduced stress reactivity:* If we keep the stressor characteristics constant and then how we react to the stressor affects our health and subjective well-being. The studies (Goleman & Schwarz, 1976) have shown that subjects with meditation mindfulness experience reached earlier to a calmer state of mind as compared to normal control group subjects. The researchers found that all the subjects with meditation experience are also exhibit more initial sensitivity to the negative events but they also reach faster to the stage of equanimity because of their greater ability to let go of negative experiences.
- *Enhanced cognitive vitality:* Meditation based mindfulness can also help avert the cortical thinning of frontal cortex that is mainly associated with the old age. Age induced cortical thinning creates many social and emotional problem for the old age people. A study showed that as compared to normal control group subjects without any meditation practice, the experimental group subjects practicing Zen meditation possessed thicker cortex area (Didonna, 2009)

4.8.6 Applications

The mindfulness meditation is applicable in various areas. Some of the major areas where mindfulness has been successfully been applied are:

- *Healing our own Self:* Mindfulness has been used successfully to heal people in emotional and physical pain, without the use of any prescribed drugs or medical operations. It is a transformative way of healing that is easily applicable and effective.
- *Mindfulness in Relationships:* Couples who practice mindfulness together tend to alleviate their emotional pain and difficulties in the relationship without much effort. It is an effective way to avoid conflicts at home, and makes one better at dealing with relationships, romantic or otherwise.
- *Mindfulness in Schools:* Successful attempts have been made to apply mindfulness in school children. One such example is of a pilot study conducted by Mindful Schools and University of California on 'mindfulness and children', which involved 915 children and 47 teachers. The Mindfulness showed statistically significant improvements in behavior as compared to the control group with only 4 hours of mindfulness instructions given to the students at a very low cost.
- *Mindfulness at Work:* Introducing mindfulness at work could help strengthen the foundations of an organization. It helps the employers and employees to:
 - Increase self awareness
 - Raises levels of emotional intelligence
 - Strengthens cognitive effectiveness
 - Empathize more readily
 - Communicate more clearly
 - Focus more consistently, and
 - Direct your thoughts more appropriately

4.9 Flow

A state of flow is characterized by:-

Focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment: Because tasks that lead to flow experiences involve working towards clear goals and receiving immediate feedback about movement towards these goals, a deep level of concentration on the task is essential

Merging of action and awareness: Since the person's full concentration is on the task there is a loss of awareness of the self.

Loss of reflective self-consciousness

A sense that one can control one's actions

Distortion of temporal experience: When we are involved in flow experiences our perception of time is distorted.

Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding: Activities that lead to flow experiences are said to be 'autotelic'. Autotelic comes from the Greek words self (auto) and goal (telos). Autotelic experiences are those that arise from activities which are not done for some benefit but because the activity is intrinsically rewarding in itself.

Challenging activities that require skill: The tasks which lead to flow experiences must demand that we use our skills almost to their limits and that the task is one that can be completed.

Clear goals and immediate feedback: Tasks that lead to flow experiences have clear goals and feedback about movement towards these goals is immediate.

Dynamic equilibrium: In the state of flow, the individual operates at full capacity which is a state of dynamic equilibrium. There is a balance between perceived action capacities and perceived action opportunities which is a state of optimal arousal.

Following are the conditions of flow:

- A sense that one is engaging in challenges at a level which is appropriate to one's capacities.
- There are clear proximal goals and immediate feedback about the progress being made.
- Certain cultures and types of families are conducive to flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). All cultures have certain goals which citizens aspire for. They also specify social norms, roles, rules and rituals in accordance with which these goals may be achieved. Cultures in which the goals, norms, roles, rules and rituals closely match the skills of the population are more suitable for occurrence of flow experiences.

Work-based flow experiences are more common in cultures that permit people to have work roles that are neither boring nor overly challenging. Flow experiences are more common in cultures where religious rituals involve dance, singing or meditation etc. Flow experiences are

more common in cultures where skilled games against well-matched competitors are widely practiced.

4.9.1 Flow, Attention, and the Self

According to Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988), to understand flow experiences, we need to understand it through consciousness and the self. Consciousness is made up by subjective experience. The state of self emerges when consciousness becomes aware of itself. Attention plays a crucial role in entering and staying in flow. Intense and focused concentration implies that attention is fully invested in the present activity.

With the loss of self-consciousness in flow there is a fading of the 'me' from awareness. Staying in flow requires that attention is invested fully on the task at hand.

4.10 Spirituality

The term *spirituality* comes from the word *spirit* (to breathe) and there is general agreement that spirituality is a living, dynamic process that is oriented around whatever the individual may hold sacred. The *sacred* refers to concepts of God and transcendent reality as well as other aspects of life that take on divine character and significance by virtue of their association with the holy. Thus, the sacred can encompass material objects (e.g., crucifix, American flag), special times (e.g., the Sabbath, birth and death), special places (e.g., cathedral, the outdoors), relationships (e.g., marriage, parenting), and psychological attributes (e.g., soul, virtues). Spirituality can be defined as a search for the sacred, that is, an attempt to discover and hold onto the sacred and, when necessary, transform the sacred.

In their search for the sacred, people take a variety of spiritual pathways. These paths include traditional or nontraditional organized religious beliefs (e.g., God, afterlife, karma), practices (e.g., prayer, meditation, rituals), experiences (e.g., mysticism, conversion), and institutions (e.g., church attendance, Bible study). Pathways to the sacred may also take nonreligious forms, such as walking in the outdoors, journaling, listening to music, scientific study, intimate relations with others, or participating in sociopolitical action.

Over the course of the lifespan, the search for the sacred can unfold in many directions. For some, spirituality is a relatively smooth, stable process. For others, spirituality involves sharp shifts in spiritual pathways and understandings of the sacred itself. Some embed their spirituality in a traditional religious milieu. Others leave traditional religious settings and pursue more individualized spiritual pathways and destinations. Still others join and leave a variety of religious contexts, traditional and nontraditional, over their lives. Spirituality is, in short, a rich, complex, and multiform process.

4.10.1 History

The topic of religion was a vital concern for the founding figures of psychology. Psychologists such as William James, Edwin Starbuck, and G. Stanley Hall viewed religious and spiritual phenomena (e.g., mystical experience, conversion) as central to the study of human behavior. For much of the twentieth century, however, psychology distanced itself from religion, perhaps because the young field was concerned about demonstrating its credentials as a scientific discipline. Those who did devote attention to religious issues, such as Sigmund Freud, tended to be highly critical about religious matters. Religion was often described as irrational, delusional, or a source of pathology.

This picture began to change in the latter part of the twentieth century for several reasons. First, the *zeitgeist* of the field shifted to a focus on positive psychological constructs, including constructs often laden with spiritual meaning (e.g., forgiveness, gratitude, meaning, growth, acceptance, love). Second, theorists and researchers distinguished spirituality more sharply from institutional religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices. Third, empirical studies revealed that spiritual beliefs and practices are common place in the United States, with a large majority of people reportedly believing in God, believing in an afterlife, defining themselves as spiritual and religious, and seeing “God’s presence in all of life.” Finally, empirical research also demonstrated significant, often positive, linkages between spirituality and health and well-being. Thus, there was an eightfold increase in the number of published articles on spirituality in psychological and behavioral science journals from 1965 to 2000.

4.10.2 How Spirituality Works

Having shown that many people in the United States are spiritually involved and that spirituality is linked to health and well-being, researchers are currently taking a closer look at how spirituality works in peoples' lives. Although this research is still in process, several preliminary conclusions appear to be warranted.

The Sacred Elicits Spiritual Emotions: The experience of sacredness is accompanied by a sense of transcendence (i.e., being connected to something that goes beyond oneself), boundlessness (i.e., infinite time and space), and ultimacy (i.e., being in touch with what is “really real”). Theologian Rudolf Otto noted that the idea of the divine is often accompanied by a *mysterium*, a complex of feelings of attraction (e.g., love, adoration, gratitude) and repulsion (e.g., repulsion, fear, dread). More recently, researchers have linked perceptions of the sacred to a variety of emotion-based responses, including peak experiences, mystical experiences, and feelings of responsibility, duty, humility, awe, elevation, and uplift.

The Sacred becomes an Organizing Force: As the source of powerful emotions, the sacred becomes a passion and a priority. People feel drawn to, or even grasped by, the sacred and, as a result, they begin to invest more and more of themselves in sacred pursuits. For example, studies have shown that people who sanctify the environment (i.e., view the environment as sacred) are more likely to invest financially in environmental causes. Similarly, people direct more of their time and energy to sacred strivings than non-sacred strivings. In the process of building their lives around the sacred, people look to the sacred to lend greater coherence to disparate thoughts, feelings, actions, and goals by integrating their competing aspirations into a unified life plan.

The Sacred becomes a Resource: Sacred beliefs, practices, experiences, values, and relationships often serve as resources that people can draw on for strength, support, and satisfaction in their lives. A large body of research points to the positive implications of several spiritual pathways for individual health and well-being. Prayer and meditation, beliefs in a loving God, attendance at religious services, positive spiritual coping, and perceptions of various aspects of life as sacred have all been associated with indices of greater psychological, social, physical, and spiritual

well-being. For example, in one study of patients undergoing kidney transplant surgery and their loved ones, those who engaged in positive religious coping reported greater life satisfaction 3 months and 12 months after transplantation. In a meta-analysis of 42 studies on the effects of transcendental meditation, this practice was tied to a greater number of transcendental experiences and these experiences were, in turn, associated with significant psychological and physical change. Yet another longitudinal study focused on 100 people with HIV. People who reportedly became more spiritual and religious after their diagnosis showed significantly greater preservation of T-helper (CD4) cells and better control of their viral load over the 4-year period of the study.

The Sacred becomes a Source of Struggle: Despite the clear benefits of spirituality for health and well-being, spirituality can become a source of stress and strain when people perceive that the sacred has been threatened, damaged, or violated. In times of stress, people may experience divine struggles (e.g., feeling angry at, abandoned or punished by God), intrapsychic struggles (e.g., questions and doubts about dogma, beliefs, and behaviors), or interpersonal struggles (e.g., spiritual conflicts with clergy, family, friends, or others). Spiritual struggles such as these are by no means trivial. They appear to represent a fork in the road to decline or growth. On the one hand, spiritual struggles have been consistently and robustly tied to a variety of poorer outcomes, including poorer mental health, poorer physical health, and even greater risk of mortality. On the other hand, spiritual struggles have been linked to reports of greater stress-related growth and transformation. Researchers are currently attempting to identify those factors that determine whether spiritual struggles lead to growth or decline.

4.10.3 Why Spirituality Works

Although it has become clear that spirituality has important implications for individuals' health and well-being, a key question remains: how do we account for the spirituality-health connection? Theorists and researchers have offered and begun to examine a number of potential explanations for the relationships between spirituality and health and well-being. These include:

- Behavioral explanations (e.g., spirituality encourages good health practices that are, in turn, tied to better health and well-being).

- Psychological explanations (e.g., spirituality offers a sense of meaning, coherence, esteem, identity, hope, empowerment, and comfort that facilitates health and well-being).
- Social explanations (e.g., spirituality facilitates social connectedness, social support, and a sense of intimacy that promotes health and well-being).
- Physiological explanations (e.g., spirituality produces changes in brain, immune system, and autonomic system functioning that are associated with better health and well-being).

As yet, researchers have not been able to fully account for the links between spirituality and health through the explanations noted above. It is possible that further empirical studies will provide a clearer picture. However, it is also possible that there is something distinctive, even unique, about spirituality that accounts for the spirituality-health connection. The power of spiritual pathways such as prayer, meditation, rituals, attendance at religious services, and spiritual coping methods may lie in the fact that they are tied to perceptions of the sacred. Similarly, at least part of the power of the great virtues – forgiveness, humility, gratitude, compassion – may lie in the fact that they are often grounded in spiritual values and worldviews.

UNIT V: PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR & POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

5.1 Empathy & Altruism:

Human behavior is holistically guided by an interdependent nature and we spend a lot of time in our lives helping others in many different ways. From a small act of helping someone locate an address to volunteering to help victims of natural disasters, we engage in a lot of activity, consciously or unconsciously that basically benefit someone else- a friend or stranger for that matter. But in terms of Psychology, the question lies in exploring the reasons behind this human nature to even put themselves in danger to help someone else. However, when social psychologists started unfolding the pages of helping behavior in the late 1960s, they didn't ponder over the decision of why people helped, but rather on why people fail to help when we think they should.

Over the past 50 years however, the focus of helping behavior and its related ideas have changed and we find under its wraps the processes of empathy and altruism. Empathy is a kind of emotional response to the plight of another person. It is the ability to put oneself in the place of another person and feel what she/he does. Rather than mimicking someone else's emotions, it is about having an accurate sense of what she/he might be feeling like.

The term *altruism* is used to describe two distinct phenomena. The first is *behavioral altruism*, which refers to helping behavior that is either very costly to the helper or conveys no self-benefit for the helper. The second is *psychological altruism*, which refers to a motivation to increase the welfare of another as an end in itself. Although the latter definition is commonly used among psychologists and philosophers, the former is popular among researchers who study non-human animals.

Altruism is when we promote someone else's welfare even at the cost or risk of our own interests. It stands in opposition to being selfish and refers to a specific form of motivation that leads people to engage in behaviors that are aimed at benefitting others. It aims at increasing another's welfare. The reason for altruistic motivation is empathic concern. Empathic concern is an other-oriented emotional response driven by the perceived welfare of someone in need. Considerable evidence suggests that empathic concern motivates one to engage in altruistic behavior.

Whether or not empathy is a part of essential human nature has been a topic long debated. Universal egoism states that everything we do are ultimately aimed at self-benefit. Egoism is the motive to pursue some sort of personal benefit through targeted behavior. This personal benefit can take the form of relieving the negative emotions that an undesirable situation produces in us. Proponents of pure altruism agree that the motivation for much of what we do is egoistic. But some of us to some extent are capable of being motivated with an ultimate goal of benefiting someone else. So they propose that altruism, if not completely, is a part of basic human nature, one that arises out of empathic motions like compassion, sympathy, tenderheartedness and the like.

5.1.1 Empathic Emotion: A Potential Source of Altruistic Motivation

An important source of altruistic motivation is other-oriented emotional reaction elicited in congruence with the perceived welfare of them. This reaction has variously been called empathy; sympathy; sympathetic distress; and compassion.

Eight uses of the term Empathy (Batson, 2009): In relation to the concept of empathy, there seem to emerge eight different standpoints, as given by Daniel Batson. These are being discussed below-

Knowing the thoughts and feelings of another person: Various researchers state knowing another person's internal state as empathy, cognitive empathy, or understanding.

Assuming the posture of an observed other or mimicking the neural response: Preston & Waal (2003) put forth the idea that while trying to take the posture of an observed other, or trying to feel what the other person goes through, one goes through a state of mimicking the neural response. This not necessarily means imitating the motor behavior, but having similar kind of neural responses. The neural responses become similar because perception and action work on the same neural circuits. So as the perceptions become similar, so do the neural response and thereby one starts to get a better glimpse of the other person's internal states.

Feeling as another person would feel: Feeling the same emotion that another person would feel is a common understanding of empathy. Philosophers call coming to feel as the other feels as sympathy.

Intuiting or projecting oneself into another's situations: This state also has been called "projective empathy" (Becker, 1931). We try to project ourselves into another's situation and with the help of intuitive feelings, try to feel as they do.

Imagining how another is feeling: Wispe (1968) called imagining how another is feeling psychological empathy. Stotland (1969) spoke of an "imagine other" perspective.

Imagining how one would feel in the other's place: Adam Smith (1759/1853) referred to this act of imagination as "changing places in fancy." Mead (1934) called it "role taking". It is also known as "perspective taking".

Being upset by another's suffering: The state of personal distress evoked by seeing another in distress has been given a variety of names such as sympathetic pain; promotive tension; unpleasant arousal and empathy.

Feeling for another person who is suffering: The term 'empathy' refers to an emotion that is *other-oriented* and is *congruent* with the perceived welfare of someone else. Congruence refers to the valence of the emotion- positive or negative. However congruence of emotion doesn't imply that the content of what you feel for the other person has to be the same.

5.1.2 The Empathy Altruism Hypothesis

Daniel Batson in the year 1991 forwarded the empathy-altruism hypothesis on the basis of findings that there are instances in which egotism doesn't hold as explanations to helping behavior. It proposes that empathic concern for a person who needs help produces altruistic motivation due to which one engages in helping behavior. Empathizing with another person increases the likelihood of helping that person. Proponents of egoistic alternatives however

disagree and have to say that altruism results only from one of the three categories of empathy inducing egoistic motives i.e., reward seeking, punishment avoidance, and aversive arousal reduction. The advocates of empathy-altruism hypothesis do not completely deny the existence of egoistic motives for altruistic behavior, but they put forward that not all helping behavior is a hedonistic expression of human selfishness. Benefits to self are not always the ultimate goal for engaging in pro-social behavior; in fact they many times are unintended consequences. People help others even if there are no rewards.

Egoistic Alternatives to the Empathy-altruism hypothesis: Since the Renaissance, the dominating notion has been that altruism is guided by the motive of egotism. And modern scholars (Mansbridge, 1990, Wallach & Wallach, 1983) hold on to the position that we help others because it profits us to do so. Egotism-altruism camp, as they can be called, have to view that no matter how selfless our behavior might seem, but we engage in it only because there are underlying benefits for us, such as social appreciation, material rewards etc. The egotistical or self-benefitting actions that involve altruism can take variant forms, but can be clubbed among three major forms.

Aversive-Arousal Reduction: The most frequently proposed egoistic explanation is the empathy-helping relationship. It proposes that feeling empathy for a suffering person is unpleasant, and to eliminate these feelings that are causing distress, benefiting that person is a means to this self-serving end.

The experiments testing this against the empathy-altruism hypothesis do so by varying the ease of escaping further exposure to a suffering victim. Since it states that empathic arousal is a result of seeing the victim suffering, one can reduce this arousal by helping behavior or by escaping away from the situation altogether. But escaping from the situation doesn't allow one to reach the altruistic goal of relieving the victim's distress. Therefore, the aversive-arousal explanation predicts elimination of the empathy-helping relationship when escape is easy; empathy-altruism hypothesis does not. Results of experiments testing these competing predictions have consistently supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not the aversive-arousal reduction explanation. The chance for easy escape during an emergency situation reduces the likelihood of helping behavior only for people predominantly experiencing personal distress

rather than empathy. Those experiencing a predominance of empathy will help irrespective of whether or not possibilities of escape are present. These results therefore cast serious doubt on this popular egoistic.

Empathy-Specific Punishment: A second egoistic explanation claims that through socialization people learn that obligation to help and shame and guilt for failure to help leads to empathy for someone in need. When faced with emergency situations they engage in self-talk of what will others think of them if they do not engage in helping behavior, or what perceptions they will hold about themselves. So in order to escape these feelings of guilt, shame etc., they engage in altruistic behavior. But here again, experiments have failed to support the egoistic idea and have rather patterned on the empathy altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991).

Empathy-Specific Reward: The third egoistic explanation claims that people learn through socialization that special rewards such as praise, honor, and pride occur on helping a person for whom they feel empathy. This form of egoistic explanation has been tested and received no support (Batson et al., 1988). But two variations of this explanation have been proposed. Cialdini et al. (1987) proposed the negative state relief explanation where they suggested that empathy experienced while witnessing another person's suffering is a negative affective state (sadness, sorrow), to relief which the person feeling empathy engages in altruistic or helping behavior. A second variation on an empathy specific reward explanation was proposed by Smith et al. (1989) where they proposed that empathically aroused individuals help in order to feel joy at the needy individual's relief. Experimental results consistently have supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

5.2 Gratitude:

The word 'Gratitude' is derived from the Latin term *gratia*, which means grace, gratefulness, and graciousness. It's a concept that is close to kindness. Gratitude has been a very popular topic amongst the self-help book authors and also it attracts a lot of attention as it is a virtue that is extremely likeable and desired. However, gratitude like a few other positive psychology constructs e.g. courage hasn't received much attention. One reason that could be attributed to the

lack of empirical research in this area could be the fact that this concept is difficult to empirically measure and put to test. Therefore, relationship of gratitude with health and well being variables stand speculative and are under scrutiny. The systematic study of gratitude had its auspicious beginning in 2000 under the purview of positive psychology.

Gratitude is different from the feeling of indebtedness, which is an obligation of repayment. Gratitude can be seen as a motivator of behaviour wherein people work towards enhancing and improving relationships with the benefactor.

Robert Emmons, a leader in the field of gratitude research, defines gratitude as the feeling that occurs when a person attributes a benefit received by him to another.

According to McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons and Larson (2001) gratitude is seen as a moral affect as both the origins and consequences of gratitude are oriented toward the well-being of another person. It is a prosocial behaviour that has positive feelings both for the beneficiary and the benefactor.

5.2.2 Gratitude in Pleasant and Unpleasant Circumstances:

It is obvious to be grateful in pleasant circumstances, but do we also feel gratitude in situations that are not-so-welcome, for example, in situations of trauma, natural disasters, death of a loved one etc? The religious texts teach us to be grateful in all circumstances. But, it certainly is not easy. In such circumstances an individual would be able to express gratitude only if these circumstances are perceived as opportunities for growth and enhancement. It will be perceived as a sign of human strength only if one is able to have this outlook towards life. Contrast effect plays an important role here, for example, appreciating spring after winters, a feast after a fast. Such events instill feelings of gratitude.

Also, reminding oneself of previous acts of gratitude toward oneself also provides a buffer against negative circumstances. Also thanking for things that are still alright in face of adversities also helps in coping, e.g. not losing a loved one in a disaster is an act of gratitude.

The coping strategy of minding oneself of things to be grateful about is in fact very important during life changing events. Therefore, appreciating life as it comes instills positive feelings of gratitude.

5.2.3 Functions of Gratitude

McCullough and colleagues have put forth 3 functions of gratitude. First, as a **moral barometer** wherein gratitude signals a change in one's social relationships, for both the people and instills both these people with positive feelings. Second, as a **moral motive**, due to this act of kindness, the beneficiary is also reminded of other acts of gratitude that may have happened in past and may take a chance to reciprocate these benefactors for their kindness, Third, as a **moral reinforcer**, wherein the beneficiary is instilled with an obligation to continue the tradition of helping other and thus reciprocate grateful acts to other people, which starts a chain of positive acts toward mankind.

5.2.4 Benefits of Gratitude

Gratitude is an emotional expression of thankfulness. It also has a very strong spiritual component wherein gratitude is seen as a source of connecting to each other. Gratitude allows an individual to appreciate everyday mundane activities with a sense of wonder and appreciation for life. Life becomes worth living if it has moments of gratitude. It has great impacts on an individual's psychological and emotional well-being as it provides continuous intrinsic rewards. Gratitude has been linked with positive states such as happiness, pride and hope (Overwalle, Mervielde, & De Schuyter, 1995), experiences of extreme happiness (Gallup, 1998) and experiences of a meaningful and productive life (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). It has empathy at its foundation in an interpersonal emotion that exists in an interpersonal context. Gratitude imbibes feelings of love and care. In this interpersonal context it is highly imperative to acknowledge the cost of the gift, the recipient must identify with the psychological state of the one who has provided it. The benefactor's giving is interpreted by the recipient as freely offered, and with that comes the acknowledgment that such offering might prove costly to or incur hardship for the benefactor. Such an understanding blends fittingly with some object relations formulations of gratitude, where it is seen as a major derivative of the capacity for love (Klein, 1957; Emmons & Shelton, 2002).

Gratitude is related to a host of positive outcomes, including subjective well-being, relational support, and prosocial behavior. Counting blessings daily for 2 weeks has been

associated with greater school satisfaction at immediate post-test and at 3-week follow-up. Beyond improving social and emotional functioning, gratitude also may promote academic gains via achievement motivation. School psychologists should consider gratitude as a viable path for promoting positive youth development in the context of both assessment and intervention (Froh, Miller & Snyder, 2007). Also, children who practice grateful thinking have more positive attitudes toward school and their families (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008).

Feelings of gratitude are associated with less frequent negative emotions and more frequent positive emotions such as feeling energized, alert, and enthusiastic (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Algoe and Haidt (2009) found that people experienced pleasant muscle relaxation when recalling situations in which they'd felt grateful. Therefore, this and many other studies have found relationships with gratitude and well-being of a person.

Also it has been found that gratitude like other emotions broadens and builds (Fredrikson, 2001). It appears to broaden people's modes of thinking as they creatively consider a wide array of actions that might benefit others. This positive emotion also builds psychological and social resources (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). Gratitude also builds people's skill for loving and showing appreciation. Their creativity enhances and they then find new ways to express their gratitude.

5.2.5 Cultural Expressions of Gratitude

People across cultures and nations express and reciprocate gratitude in different ways. It can range from the very classic and legendary "thank you" to a non-verbal expression such as a smile. For example, in northern India where Hindi is prevalent, *ābhāra vyakta*, is a conventional term to express thanks. In Chinese the expression *gan en dai de* that means bearing a debt of gratitude for one's kindness, and also *gan en tu bao* that expresses the grateful feeling for a kind act and planning to repay it.

In France, being polite is of utmost importance. So to say "thank you very much in French, the phrase *merci beaucoup* is used. Through his Ph.D dissertation Al-Zubaidi (2011) compared expression of gratitude between Native Speakers of American English, Iraqi Arabic, and Iraqi EFL Learners and found that on the perception level, the three groups followed different patterns in assessing the four perceptual questions of the degree of gratefulness, the

degree of imposition, the likelihood of expected gratitude giving, and the likelihood of expected gratitude responding. On the production level, the three groups generated relatively similar strategy types with some exceptions and different amount of strategy use. As far as length of speech is concerned, Iraqi EFL learners generated a different number of strategies of thanks giving and responding compared to that of native speakers of American English and of Iraqi Arabic.

Contextual variables influenced the groups' production and perception of the speech behavior under investigations. Overall, Iraqi Arabic and Iraqi EFL groups were more sensitive to social status while American English group was more sensitive to social distance. Also in a recent study by Pishghadam and Zarei (2012) on cross-cultural comparison of gratitude expressions in Persian, Chinese and American English found that although thanking is regarded as the most favourite strategy among all three groups, there are significant differences in the ways Persian and Chinese learners of English, and also native speakers of English use the speech act of thanking.

5.2.6 Cultivating Gratitude

It is important to understand that whether the virtue of gratitude can be cultivated? Does developing gratitude provide a depressed individual with a hope to live for? Or can it be used to alleviate distress and provide avenues for better positive living?

There have been researches that have put forth steps through which an individual can develop the value of gratitude. Miller (1995) offers a 4 step guide: (1) Identify non-grateful thoughts; (2) formulate gratitude-supporting thoughts; (3) substitute the gratitude-supporting thoughts for non-grateful thoughts and (4) translate the inner feelings into outward action. Shelton (2000) believed that developing a healthy moral life involves (1) a self awareness that one is moral, (2) developing gratitude (3) self examination of one's day and (4) encouraging one's self to increase moral responsibility. All these ways place a high degree of initiative that the individual will have to take to develop. Also engaging in and keeping a daily moral inventory also helps in developing gratitude.

Remembering one's acts of gratitude instills positive feelings that further motivate an individual to indulge in more subsequent acts of gratitude. This therefore, starts a cycle of

gratitude. The acts that have been built over a period of time also act as buffers in protecting an individual from negative emotions such as guilt, depression, shame etc.

Making a personal commitment that one wants to invest psychic energy in developing a personal schema, outlook or worldview of one's life as a "gift" or one's very self as "gifted" holds considerable sway from the standpoint of positive psychology. Indeed numerous groups (like 'Alcoholics Anonymous') have absorbed this insight wherein people get together and view themselves as a gift. Thus, setting aside time on daily basis to recall moments of gratitude associated with even mundane or ordinary events, personal attributes one has, or valued people one encounters has the potential to interweave and thread together a sustainable life theme of highly cherished personal meaning just as it nourishes a fundamental life stance whose thrust is decidedly positive (Emmons & Shelton, 2002).

Thus, this highly required virtue of gratitude needs to be inculcated in infants since their childhoods. They should be taught the importance of being thankful and gratitude. This virtue develops over a period that requires constant motivation and an environment that is provided by teachers and parents.

5.2.7 Characteristics of Grateful People

Appreciation- More grateful people tend to see their benefactors as more selfless and having exerted more effort to help, as well as placing higher value on the help they received (Wood, Maltby, Stewart, Linley, & Joseph, 2008). While validating these findings in everyday lives it was found that more grateful people rated factors such as being helped by another person, sincere and selfless act of the benefactor, the effort spent etc higher than less grateful people.

Interpretation styles- These results of the above mentioned study also suggested that grateful people interpret events in a unique way, and this interpretation style might account for the benefits extracted from gift giving experiences.

Social support- Through the same research using a longitudinal design it was found that gratitude positively related to social support, stress and depression. The initial feelings of gratitude predicted greater feelings of social support and less stress and depression three months later.

Relationship building- Feelings of gratitude are associated with increased feelings of closeness and a desire to build or strengthen relationships with a benefactor (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). This interpersonal benefit allows us to get closer to each other and further indulge in acts of benevolence and thus works towards the moral benefit of the entire society.

Spirituality- Grateful people tend to be more spiritual than their less-grateful counterparts. People who are generally grateful report being more agreeable and less narcissistic compared with less grateful people. People who are more grateful also report being happier (Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003).

Faithfulness- If the gratitude expressed to people cannot be reciprocated, then in that case such people reciprocate their feelings through a permanent faithfulness and an obligation to remain indebted for life.

5.4 Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the supreme human virtues. The idea of forgiveness is integral to many religious texts, scriptures and philosophical discourses. William Shakespeare in his classic work *The Merchant of Venice* has considered mercy as the finest of all human qualities. In the Hindu religious mythology, a defining quality of all gods is the ability to forgive and punish. The idea and ability of forgiveness has been more often connected with the idea of divinity as compared to the ability to punish. In Buddhism a form of forgiveness called compassion has been considered a way of achieving Nirvana or salvation.

There is an increasing need in the society for an absolute understanding of forgiveness. Traditionally, forgiveness was conceptualized as acting on a mere moral or religious intention. Although several empirical articles have been published in research journals about forgiveness, those with a philosophical or psychological perspective appeared only a few decades ago. (McCollough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000). Adequate financial resources and research teams working on scientific research on forgiveness could create a global awareness for the significance of forgiveness research.

Forgiveness is a comprehensive word and it comes in many forms and varieties. Words like mercy, compassion, excusing, forgetting, etc., can be associated with the idea of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a positive pro-social behavior and the chances of its being confounded with the other kind of pro-social constructs like compassion or mercy are significantly high. As previously stated, forgiveness is a positive pro-social behavior which involves the presence of the victim, a perpetrator and a criminal act or wrongdoing from the perpetrator to the victim. In response to the perpetrated wrongdoing the victim forgives the wrong doer then we call it an instance of forgiveness. Thompson et al (2005) describes 'forgiveness' as relieving oneself of the negativity fastened to the transgressor. The target of the consequent forgiveness may be either oneself or another person or the situation.

Further, a look at the existing research literature suggests that forgiveness has been defined either as a response, or as a personality characteristic, or as a characteristic of the social unit. These three aspects of definitions have been discussed below:

- *As response*, forgiveness can be defined as a pro-social change in thoughts, emotions and/or behaviors of a victim toward the wrongdoer. Conceptualizations of forgiveness as a response are based on one primary feature: when people forgive, their thoughts and behaviors towards the offenders become less negative and more pro-social eventually. (McCollough et al, 2000).
- *As a personality characteristic*, forgiveness may be explained as a tendency to forgive others in diversified circumstances. Although most people fall around the mean of the population in a forgiveness-unforgiveness continuum, the disposition to forgive itself may have certain aspects. (Mullet et al, 1998).
- *As a characteristic of social units*, forgiveness may be described as a virtue similar to intimacy, trust or commitment. Some social institutions like families or marriages are characterized by a higher intensity of forgiveness, whereas other institutions, which cast out members who transgress, are characterized by less forgiveness.

5.4.1 Types of Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be distinguished between positive forgiveness and negative forgiveness. Positive (or emotional) forgiveness is a therapeutic process of absolute forgiveness, which also

involves reinstating positive feelings and thoughts toward the offender. Negative forgiveness, on the other hand, is a situation in which forgiveness is extended while brooding over the act of transgression. Negative forgiveness, also known as decisional forgiveness, involves mere overt inhibition of a retributive response, mostly in the interests of social acceptance. Yet, grudges are formed and sustained.

The two types of forgiveness indicate two distinct psychological processes. In pure positive forgiveness, cognitive restructuring is used to create the belief that retribution, of any kind is unnecessary. Retribution is instead a coping mechanism in situations where the hurt avoidance failed. Emotional forgiveness is not expected to improve psychological well-being but to restore well-being following the negative feelings or grudges. Negative or decisional forgiveness, on the contrary, involves a dissonance in the thought process of the victim; his positive well-being maybe enhanced by the thought that he has ‘forgiven’ the transgressor, but the negative effect of grudge holding and anger would sustain. However, the process of adapting to consonant thoughts about the transgression will occur in varying degrees, depending on variables such as the degree of hurt, or victim’s capacity for forgiveness. The meta-analysis of Wade et al. (2005) confirms a positive relationship between the time spent in group counseling and the intensity of forgiveness. It was concluded that changes in forgiveness patterns reflect the passage of time and strength of training to reduce negative forgiveness.

Table showing difference between Positive and Negative forgiveness

POSITIVE / EMOTIONAL FORGIVENESS	NEGATIVE / DECISIONAL FORGIVENESS
Arrived at emotionally; through a pro-social change in thoughts or behavior	Arrived at by logic or by will
Reduces unforgiving emotions	Unforgiveness is sustained; chances of increase in unforgiveness levels
Occurs with or without decisional forgiveness	Occurs without emotional forgiveness
Emotions and behavior toward the transgressor already consonant.	Attempts to justify behavior as in consonance with their emotion
Positive emotions toward the transgressor tend to continue.	Emotions of vengeance and anger maybe suppressed, resulting in frustration or magnification of negative feelings

5.4.2 Forgiveness as technique of positive living:

Many psychologists believe that forgiveness plays an important role in the well-being of individuals and societies. The common acts of forgiveness are known to indicate potential benefits, when trying to resolve social conflicts or a relationship or general health of society (Bono, 2005). Commonplace forgiveness goes a long way in creating a harmonious society. Positive emotions, thoughts and behavior are inculcated depending on the degree of genuineness. Genuine forgiveness requires the victim to be compassionate and benevolent toward the transgressor and to part with the right to revenge and resentment.

Forgiveness generally leads to small but positive outcomes in psychological and physiological health and well-being. Forgiveness indicates high levels of compassion and empathy toward the wrongdoer. Forgiveness interventions have positively correlated self-report measures of the 'propensity to forgive' with measures of psychological health and well-being. Mauger et al. (1992) correlated 'Forgiveness of Others Scale' and 'Forgiveness of Self Scale' with clinical scales from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Low scores on 'Forgiveness of Self Scale' were found to be more positively correlated with anxiety, short-temperedness, low self-esteem and depression than scores on 'Forgiveness of Others' scale. This indicated that people who had a tendency to feel forgiven were less vulnerable to psychological issues.

5.4.3 Positive psychology of Forgiveness

Forgiveness, in the context of positive psychology, assumes that dwelling on the negative aspects related to the hurt would continue to damage psychological health. It is conceptualized forgiveness as a motivational phenomenon (McCullough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997).

5.4.4 Forgiveness & Happiness

Forgiveness, in context of positive psychology, emphasizes on enabling one to experience peace and calm in the present moment without holding grudges and inhibiting retributive thoughts. (Friedman, 2009). Forgiving lets one stay centered in the present than dwelling on the past or

worrying about the future. Genuine, positive forgiveness helps one to return to his core self, of peace, love, happiness, strength and joy.

Forgiveness allows us to let go of our negative feelings towards the transgressor. Negative forgiveness has been shown to affect cardiovascular activity and increase stress levels. Meditation practice helps us to clear the past from mind and body, so as to enjoy a better health, increase in constructive energy and a renewed sense of our existence. Although the relation between forgiveness and happiness has a biblical framework, empirical studies in the field of positive psychology are also increasing. Yet, limited research has been done to study the link between these concepts. Maltby et al (2005) have theorized a positive correlation between forgiveness and happiness. Happiness is considered as the supreme form of human contentment and satisfaction. If forgiveness reflects human strength and positive thinking, it would be expected that that a positive association between the two concepts exists.

5.4.5 Applications

The concept of forgiveness has been applied in many situations and disciplines. Below are listed some of the major areas of human life where forgiveness has its applications.

- ***Forgiveness & Health:*** Worthington et al (2006) pointed out that unforgiving responses lead to poor health, especially cardiovascular activity and blood pressure. People with high blood pressures, generally are less forgiving than those who are forgiving. Researches also explain that forgiving people have better social support, are less likely to depend on alcohol or drugs, and are less prone to anxiety and depression. Acquiring the capacity to forgive can prove to be beneficial to families dealing with health issues (Friedman, 2009). Studies indicate that individuals who are forgiving have lesser risks of heart attack and experience less anger and physical pain than unforgiving individuals. Hence, forgiveness enhances your health.
- ***Forgiveness in Marriage:*** Researchers studying forgiveness in interpersonal relationships are of the opinion that forgiveness is essential part of marriage and relationship dynamics. People who are capable to forgive experience greater levels of marital satisfaction and longevity, better communication, and enhanced intimacy. It also reduces the negative affect in the relationship. Forgiving is also important after a divorce

(Friedman, 2009). The mere absence of the spouse doesn't suppress the emotional conflicts. It is necessary to learn to forgive your spouse. It saves one from repression of emotions of sadness or anger toward the spouse, which could instead result in more negativity and frustration. It is not necessary that all marriages benefit from forgiveness interventions and hence, it is necessary to highlight the need for intensive research on appropriate targets for such interventions (McNulty, 2008).

- ***Forgiveness as a Healing Process:*** Forgiveness can help alleviate psychological problems like anxiety, stress, depression, etc. Also, forgiveness has an impact on psychological well-being of an individual. It can be used to recover from psychological issues and to boost one's self-esteem and hopefulness (Enright, 2001). It is important to confront the issue and let go of the self-inflicted emotional pain and hurt.

5.5 Attachment, Love and Flourishing relationships

Every human beings is dependent upon others for their health and happiness. Relationship provides us with a tool for coping with anxiety, fear, sharing our concerns, social support, and intimacy. Love in its variety, whether for parents, spouse, children or friends gives depth to human relations it is what brings people closer to one another.

5.5.1 Defining Close Relationships

The relationships involved in our daily social interactions are very significant, but relationships involving friendship, romantic love and marriage are different and have a profound impact on our well-being throughout the life. Degree of intimacy is something that separates close relationships from casual relationships. It refers to the depth of understanding, trust, involvement, connection and whether or not the relationship is sexual. Therefore it is in this sense we can say that the close relationships are the most intimate ones.

Brehm (2007) suggest six core characteristics that set intimate relationships apart from more casual relationships:

- i. **Knowledge-** mutual understanding based on reciprocal self-disclosure.

- ii. **Trust-** assumption that no harm will be done by the other person in the relationship.
- iii. **Caring-** genuine concern for the other and ongoing monitoring and maintenance of relationship.
- iv. **Interdependence-** intertwining of lives and mutual influence.
- v. **Mutuality-** sense of “we-ness” and overlapping of lives.
- vi. **Commitment-** intention to stay in the relationship through its ups and downs.

5.5.2 History of Research on Romantic Love

In Greek terms, four traditions in the history of love (Singer, 1984, 1987) can be noted: (a) **Eros**: the search for the beautiful, (b) **philia**: the affection in friendship, (c) **nomos**: submission and obedience to the divine; and (d) **agape**: the bestowal of love by the divine. In an attempt to give a comprehensive history of love, Irving Singer came up with the classic “The Nature of Love”, a book that comes in three large volumes (1984, 1987). The Nature of Love is a philosophical history of love from antiquity to the modern era.

Hatfield (1988), Hatfield & Rapson (1996) proposed that passionate love, as an intense attraction, has existed in all cultures and all historical periods and is essentially a “human universal.” In one of their studies, Hendrick and Hendrick (1993) asked college students to write essays about their romantic relationships or about their closest friendship. Not only was friendship the dominant theme in describing romantic relationships but almost half of the participants spontaneously named their romantic partner as their closest friend. Consistent with these findings, Sprecher and Regan (1998) found that both companionate love and passionate love were related to commitment and relationship satisfaction. Friendship, along with passion, is thus an important ingredient of love.

Later on, Hendrick and Hendrick (1992, 2009) also hypothesized that only during the last 300 years or so have cultural forces led people to develop a sense of self that was capable of loving and caring for a romantic partner over a lifetime. Simpson, Campbell, and Berscheid (1986) examined college students’ perceptions of the importance of love as a basis for marriage, in data collected over a 30-year period. Students over time reported romantic love as being an increasingly important basis for marriage.

The growth of love marriages spread widely in the Western world in the 18th century. In the Indian context, love has always played a key role in both mythology and modern dynasties. From the tales of Ramayana and Mahabharata, to those of Jodha-Akbar and Mumtaz-Shahjahan, Indians have a rich history of love stories. Though the traditions of arranged marriages are predominant in the tales of matchmaking, love marriages have off late found a new growth. Another note worthy point here is that arranged marriages have worked successfully over the centuries and so in a way; it might be a query that does love work out well even when it doesn't come up as one's own choice?

5.5.3 Models for Explaining Love

Theories of love are difficult to classify. Nevertheless, they may be grouped under two broad headings; naturalistic/biological and psychological/social.

Naturalistic/Biological Approaches: Recent studies have begun to explore some of the biological underpinnings of our need for belongingness. For example, oxytocin is a pituitary hormone which sometimes is referred to as the “cuddle hormone” because close physical contacts such as touching, hugging and kissing stimulate its release (Hazan, Campa & Gur-Yaish, 2006). Oxytocin, along with vasopressin helps humans and about 3 percent of other mammal species to experience lasting, monogamous love. These two chemicals are associated with our ability to form memories of others and help us recognize other people. They're also released, along with dopamine, during sex. Oxytocin levels however are at their highest during sexual orgasm, in both men and women (Uvnas-Moberg, 1997).

In order to understand the brain's response to love, one must examine the brain and fully comprehend the myriad array of structures involved. One of the main structures involved with falling in love is the limbic system. The particular system is well known as being the part of the brain involved in emotional response. The limbic system is actually several structures combined, including the basal nuclei, the thalamus, and the hypothalamus. While all of these structures are vital, the hypothalamus is directly involved in both behavioral and sexual function. Combining these two important functions, one can see how the limbic system is so crucial to falling in love.

5.5.4 Evolution of Love

The question as to why humans love has been answered from an evolutionary perspective. We love because we are meant to reproduce. Species continue through reproduction, and continuation of the species is paramount in evolution. Since mating is the ultimate goal, then feelings of romantic love are merely a vehicle towards this goal. Mellen (1981) argued that the survival of the human species necessitated an emotional bond between breeding pairs of partners so that both partners would attend to their helpless infants. Adult humans are designed to respond to the cries and babbles of infants; and rush to feed them and pick them up. The burden of child care is so intense that it takes two parents to bring up even one baby. Buss (1988) defined love as consisting of behaviors enacted by both females and males that strengthen the bonding function and ultimately serve to perpetuate the human species.

Psychological/Social Approaches: Given the intense interest in love, psychologists over the past few decades have taken a different stand on this humane feeling of love. Few of these conceptualizations are discussed below:

Passionate and Companionate Love: Berscheid and Walster (1978) classified romantic love into passionate and companionate love. They defined passionate love as a state of total absorption of two lovers, typically involving strong sexual attraction, infatuation, exclusivity, and emotions that run full gamut from ecstasy to anguish.

Companionate love on the other hand is manifested in a strong bond and an intertwining of lives that brings about feelings of comfort and peace. It is slower-developing in comparison to passionate love and also, less emotional, calmer and more serene. The two forms can occur simultaneously or intermittently rather than sequentially (from passionate to companionate).

5.5.5 The Triangular Theory of Love:

In Sternberg's triangular theory of love, intimacy, passion and commitment each represent one side of a triangle describing love shared by two people (Sternberg, 1986, 1987). The **intimacy** component is primarily emotional or affective in nature and involves feelings of warmth,

closeness and connection in the love relationship. The **passion** component is motivational and consists of the drives that are involved in romantic and physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena. The **commitment** component is largely cognitive and represents both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to maintain that love. According to Sternberg, these three love components differ with respect to a number of properties, including stability, conscious controllability, and experiential salience.

5.5.6 Self-Expansion Theory of Love

Aron and Aron (1986, 1996), based on Eastern traditions (e.g., Hinduism) concerning the concept of self, proposed that humans have a basic motive for self-expansion. The emotions, cognitions and behaviors of love fuel one's ability to expand the self. This growth of self may incorporate physical possessions, as well as power and influence. Falling in love creates a rapid expansion of self-boundaries and therefore is pleasurable.

Attachment Approaches: This approach raises the intriguing possibility that some of our most basic, and perhaps unconscious, emotional responses to intimacy are shaped by the kind of relationship we had with our parents. It was developed out of the work of Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (1979), who studied the types of relationships that infants form with their caregivers. For example, Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied attachment theory to adult love relationships, noting that it provides an explanation for both the joys and the sorrows manifested in adult love and embraced the categories of secure, avoidant and anxious attachments. In 1991, Bartholomew and Horowitz further categorized the avoidant attachment type into dismissive and fearful.

5.5.7 Love across Cultures

While some scholars note that the rich texture and subtle nuances of love need to be understood within a cultural context (Dion & Dion, 1996); others believe that most fundamental aspects of love transcend place and time.

One of the focus of cross-cultural research on love is the idea of romantic love as a prerequisite for marriage, the results are mixed when comparison is mad between individualistic

and collectivistic cultures, Sprecher et al. (1994) found that there is no difference in the beliefs of individuals in USA and Japan regarding the influence of love on marriage, on the other hand Levine et al. (1995) studied 11 cultures and found the individuals from individualistic cultures were more likely to put love as an essential criteria for marriage than individuals from collectivistic cultures.

In studying ethnic groups in US under the shadow of love, Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) found that Asian students scored lower on Eros love and higher on Storge and Pragma love than Black or White Americans. Dion and Dion (1993) compared the love styles of ethnically diverse groups of students in Canada, and found that Asians scored higher on Storge love than Anglo groups. Sprecher et al. (1994) explored American, Japanese, and Russian love styles. Though there certainly were cultural differences (Japanese respondents identified less with certain romantic beliefs, and Russians were less likely to require love as a prerequisite for marriage), the respondents from all countries were found to be similar in many love attitudes and experiences.

For example, Regan (1998); Regan & Berscheid (1999) noted that sexual desire is a fundamental component of romantic love. In a large-scale study of sexual behavior in the United States, Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels (1994) found that respondents who expressed the greatest physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction in their relationships were those in partnered, monogamous relationships. More recently, Sternberg has focused on love as a social construction, varying across time and cultures (e.g., Beall & Sternberg, 1995).

Landis and O'Shea (2000) examined the concept of passionate love across several countries and found that this construct seemed to have unique factor structures across different cultural groupings, dimensions such as insecurity–security, other-centeredness–self-centeredness, and instability–stability. Different cultural practices, such as arranged marriages, may also dictate the value love has within a society, which is very much the case in India. Some researchers have found differences in constructs such as emotional investment or in the experiences of passionate or companionate love among different cultural groups.

5.5.8 Communicating Love

Considering the evidence for the cross-cultural differences in attitudes and style related to love, it can be said that the speech and expression of love also differs. Although numerous insights are

generated regarding communication by various ethnographic studies across cultures, however speech events related to friendship and love are not known and also the differences in the activities or events that constitute the scenes for expressing love are not known.

Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori (2002) conducted a study that examined the cross cultural differences related to expressions of intimacy between individuals from USA and Japan, they found that the Americans reported greater intimacy, openness and physical contact for expressing intimacy while the Japanese cite greater understanding as an intimacy form. In another recent study, Wilkins and Gareis (2006) examined the locution “‘I love you’” cross-culturally. Results indicated that the use of the locution “‘I love you’” fluctuates greatly across cultures: while in some culture it is used exclusively for romantic declarations of love, it has a much wider distribution in others. They also found that this phrase was used more by females and by those who used English.

5.5.9 Flourishing Relationships:

Positive psychologists working in the area of close relationships have begun to focus on what makes existing relationships flourish.

Minding relationships: The minding theory of relationships (Harvey et al, 2002) describes how closeness in relationships may be enhanced. Minding refers to the reciprocal knowing process involving the non-stop, interrelated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of persons in a relationship (Harvey et al., 2001). The five components of minding are as follows:

1. **Knowing and being known:** This relates to seeking to understand one’s partner in terms of their dreams, fears vulnerabilities etc. This also involves giving more preference to knowing one’s partner than focusing on one’s personal information.
2. **Making relationship-enhancing attributions:** The best strategy would be to attribute positive behaviors to dispositional causes and negative behaviors to external causes. This also involves giving benefit of doubt to the partner.
3. **Accepting and respecting:** This involves empathy and social skills. Accepting the strengths and weaknesses of the partner is very important for the continued development of the relationship.

4. **Maintaining reciprocity:** This relates to active participation of both the partners in relationship enhancement.
5. **Continuity in minding:** this relates to persisting in mindfulness and planning to become closer to each other as the relationship grows.