

INTERVIEW

STRENGTHEN STRENGTHS. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AS A GAME CHANGER.

Petra Griesser-Strobl, an expert in positive psychology and a life-affirming person through and through, heads up SINN.WOHL together with Anja Cserveny-Hiebel. This is a forum aiming to inspire, strengthen and empower people, teams and organisations using findings and methods from positive psychology and the science of well-being. We asked her what it is all about:



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EXPERT IN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



Where does positive psychology come from and how can it help us?

Despite the fact Aristotle already spoke about happiness as a life goal, positive psychology is a relatively young branch of psychology first unveiled in 1998 by Prof. Martin Seligman, the then president of the American Psychology Association (APA). Through his research Seligman developed the PERMA model, which identifies five key components of human well-being: Positive emotions (P), Engagement (E), Relationships (R), Meaning (M) and Achievement (A). Unlike traditional psychology, which focuses primarily on alleviating and curing mental illness, positive psychology aims to bring people into a state of well-being and keep them there. Seligman designed a scale from -10 to +10 to illustrate that traditional psychology focuses on moving a mentally ill person out of the negative range -10 to 0. Positive psychology on the other hand, focuses on the range from 0 to +10 to guide people into a state of well-being and keep them there. Within this range we are thriving. Sound scientific findings prove that both individuals and society benefit from it. It goes without saying that society is better off when the people in it enjoy a high level of well-being. The same also applies to companies. It is important to emphasise that positive psychology is not the same as positive thinking. It acknowledges crises and difficulties in life, but focuses primarily on using and promoting individual strengths. Positive psychology of-

fers simple and effective tools to improve personal well-being. We are talking here about behaviour, in particular human behaviour based on meaning and values.

What specific tips can you give our readers to achieve this level of well-being and maintain it?

1. Be conscious of how well you are doing and what you are proud of.
2. Keep a gratitude diary: every day write down three things you are grateful for and think about how you contributed to them.
3. Write a thank you letter: write a thank you letter to a special person and ideally read it to them.
4. Recognise your character strengths: complete the University of Zurich's character strengths test and focus on your two most prominent strengths in order to develop them further. (www.characterstaerken.org VIA test (free))
5. Nature walks: walks either alone or in company can be healing and help you to promote your well-being and think about the meaning of your life (or stage of life).



Which aspects of positive psychology are particularly relevant and helpful for your company?

1. I feel felt: better perceive employees through workshops, coaching and discussions thereby promoting well-being.
2. Strengthen strengths: development and use of individual strengths. Put together teams based on the strengths of individual members to ensure optimal complementarity and effective collaboration.
3. Resilience training: train employees to maintain an optimistic attitude following setbacks and during difficult times.
4. Support platforms such as OpenUp enable employees to access mindfulness and relaxation programmes as well as anonymous psychological help around the clock.

W Stärken stärken. Die Positive Psychologie zielt darauf ab, Menschen in einen Zustand des Wohlbefindens zu bringen und sie dort zu halten. Dieser Ansatz unterscheidet sich von der traditionellen Psychologie, die sich auf die Linderung und Heilung psychischer Krankheiten konzentriert. Die Positive Psychologie fördert die fünf Schlüsselkomponenten des menschlichen Wohlbefindens: positive Emotionen, Engagement, Beziehungen, Sinn und Leistung. Petra Griesser-Strobl gibt praktische Tipps zur Förderung des persönlichen Wohlbefindens, wie das Erkennen der eigenen Charakterstärken, das Führen eines Dankbarkeitstagebuchs oder Spaziergänge in der Natur. Unternehmen empfiehlt sie die Anwendung von Positiver Psychologie im Rahmen von Workshops und Coachings zur besseren Wahrnehmung der Mitarbeiterinnen, Stärkenorientierung bei der Teambzusammensetzung und die Implementierung von Plattformen wie "Open-up" für anonyme psychologische Hilfe. Positive Psychologie ist nicht einfach eine positive Denkweise, sondern eine sinn- und wertorientierte Haltung.

Rafforzare i punti di forza. La psicologia positiva ha l'obiettivo di accompagnare le persone a una condizione di benessere stabile e duratura. Un approccio che si differenzia dalla psicologia tradizionale, più indirizzata ad alleviare e curare le patologie psichiche. La psicologia positiva stimola i cinque elementi chiave del benessere umano: emozioni positive, impegno, relazioni, sensatezza e prestazione. Petra Griesser-Strobl dà consigli pratici per stimolare il benessere, tra gli altri: individuare i propri punti di forza, tenere un diario della gratitudine e passeggiare nella natura. Alle imprese suggerisce di applicare i principi della psicologia positiva attraverso workshop e coaching per migliorare la percezione di sé, formare i gruppi di lavoro in base ai punti di forza di ognuno e implementare piattaforme di aiuto psicologico anonimo come "Open-up". La psicologia positiva non si limita al pensiero positivo, ma è piuttosto un approccio alla vita orientato alla sensatezza e ai valori.