

Chapter 7

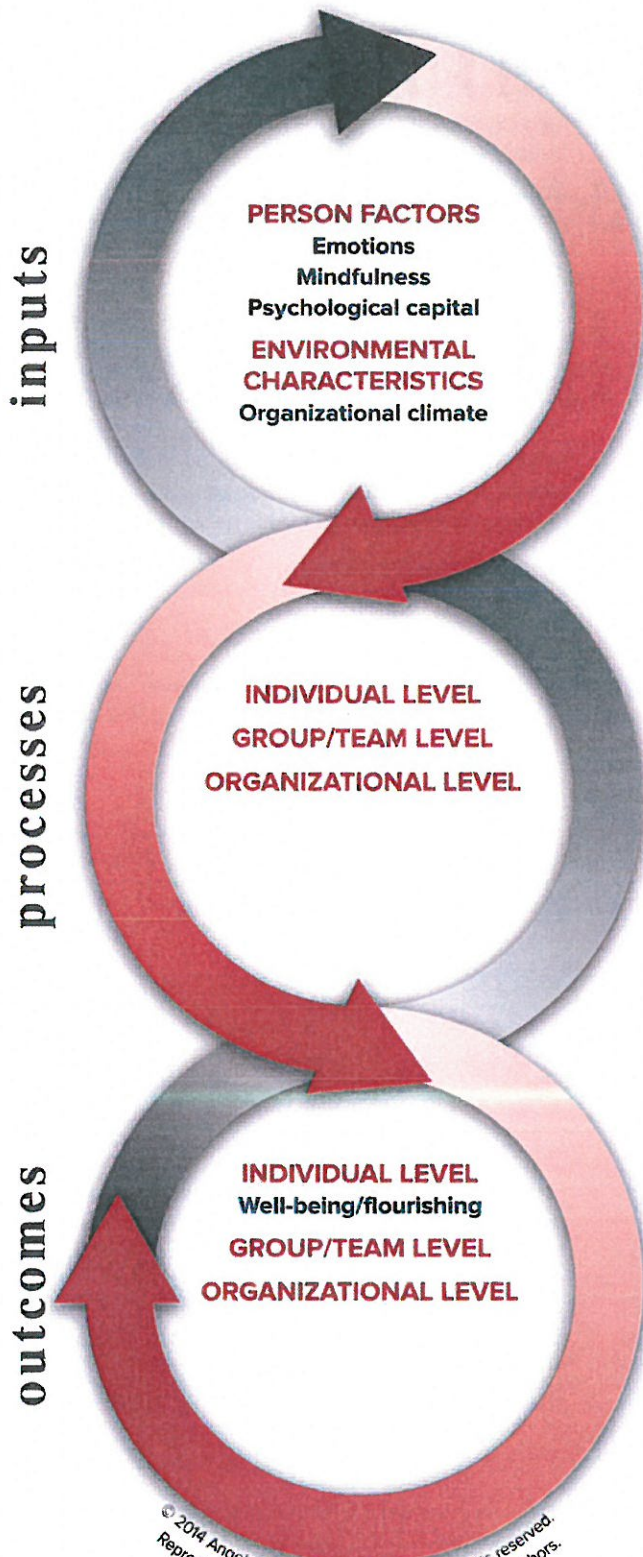
...from Kinicki and Fugate

Positive Organizational Behavior

(POB)

7 POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

How Can I Flourish at School, Work, and Home?



MAJOR TOPICS I'LL LEARN AND QUESTIONS I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER

- 7.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE OB**
MAJOR QUESTION: *How does understanding Positive OB benefit me?*
- 7.2 THE POWER OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS**
MAJOR QUESTION: *What is the role of positive emotions in POB, and how can they make me more effective at school, at work, and in other arenas of life?*
- 7.3 FOSTERING MINDFULNESS**
MAJOR QUESTION: *How can mindfulness contribute to my effectiveness?*
- 7.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL: CAPITAL THAT I OWN AND CONTROL**
MAJOR QUESTION: *How can my inner HERO benefit me at work and in my career?*
- 7.5 CREATING A CLIMATE THAT FOSTERS POSITIVE OB**
MAJOR QUESTION: *How can managers create an organizational climate that fosters Positive OB?*
- 7.6 FLOURISHING: THE DESTINATION OF POSITIVE OB**
MAJOR QUESTION: *What can I do to enhance my level of flourishing?*

INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING OB

This chapter focuses on four inputs—positive emotions, mindfulness, psychological capital, and organizational climate—that influence individuals' well-being and level of flourishing. As you read the chapter, take note of the other outcomes that are influenced by the inputs and processes associated with Positive OB.

winning at work

WHAT YOU DO IS WHAT YOU GET

If emotions are products of our thoughts, behaviors, and experiences, then it makes sense that managing our thoughts and behaviors can allow us to experience more positive emotions. Here are some specific things you can do.



- **Manage Expectations.** Some people say, “You get what you expect.” If this is true, then start your day with a positive expectation. Think of something positive that you will do or that you know will happen that day.
- **Take Time to Plan and Organize.** The most common source of stress is the perception that you have too much work to do. Rather than obsess about it, pick one thing that if done today will move you closer to your most important goal, then do that first.
- **Give a Gift to Other People.** Not a conventional, neatly wrapped present, but instead a positive or kind gesture. It can be as simple as a smile, compliment, or words of encouragement. Volumes of research show that helping others is one of the most fulfilling things that people do. The more you give, the more you’ll get.
- **Deflect Partisan Conversations.** Some topics breed conflict, such as religion and politics. You can politely bow out by saying, “Talking about that stuff makes my head hurt.”
- **Assume People Have Good Intentions.** You can’t read minds and don’t really know the “why” behind what people do. Assuming that others have evil motives can only bring you down. Try to assume the best or at least non-negative intentions.
- **Focus on the Job in Front of You.** One of the prime enemies of your positivity is worry. We often worry about things that we can’t control, including things from the past (it’s done—you can’t go back). You’re better off looking ahead than looking back. Don’t worry about the past or what you can’t control.

- **End the Day with Gratitude.** Just before you go to bed, write down at least one wonderful thing that happened that day, or something that you are particularly grateful for. It might be something small, making your mom laugh when you talked to her on the phone, or something big like acing a final exam or closing a big deal at work. Whatever it is, be grateful for that day because it will never come again.¹

FOR YOU WHAT’S AHEAD IN THIS CHAPTER

We’re concluding Part One and our discussion of the individual level by introducing you to one of the most exciting and fastest growing areas of OB, *positive organizational behavior (POB)*. The exciting news is that research suggests that you can enhance your life and job satisfaction by following some of the ideas presented in this chapter. Many inputs in the Integrative Framework contribute to POB, and it in turn affects important outcomes across all levels. We explore the importance of POB and then expand on several of the elements that help foster your own personal positivity and—as shown in the growing reports and research in the *Harvard Business Review* and the major journals in OB—the benefits of positive workplaces. Positive emotions are one such element (individual level process), as are mindfulness (person input), positive psychological capital (person input), and organizational climate (environmental characteristic input). Combined, these elements create a positive workplace environment and enable people, teams, and organizations to flourish. Flourishing is the ultimate individual-level outcome of POB and comprises positive emotions, engagement, constructive relationships, meaningfulness, and achievement.

MAJOR QUESTION

How does understanding Positive OB benefit me?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

You can benefit at school or work by understanding Positive OB (POB), a purposefully positive approach to managing the behavior of individuals, groups, and organizations. You'll see some of these potential benefits when you explore three ways in which Positive OB affects a broader set of outcomes. You'll then see the benefits of POB illustrated in detail.

Two Modes of Viewing Organizations

Let's set the stage by establishing two scenarios as set out in an early presentation of POB.

First Scenario The first scenario begins, "Imagine a world in which almost all organizations are typified by greed, selfishness, manipulation, secrecy, and a single-minded focus on winning."² Wealth is the ultimate measure of success. Feelings of distrust, anxiety, self-absorption, fear, burnout, and abuse are common. Members often experience conflict, treat each other disrespectfully, and break agreements to each other. Managers, researchers, and teachers in this context focus on problem solving, managing uncertainty, overcoming resistance, achieving profitability, and figuring out how to best the competition.

Second Scenario Now imagine a world in which appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality, and meaningfulness are the rule. Well-being and thriving for individuals, groups, and organizations are the markers of success. Trustworthiness, resilience, wisdom, humility, and positive energy are common features. Relationships and interactions are described as compassionate, loyal, honest, respectful, and forgiving. Managers, researchers, and teachers emphasize theories of excellence, positive deviance, extraordinary performance, and positive spirals of flourishing.

Emphasis, Not Rejection, of Business Realities Many professionals who first encounter POB ideas assume it simply rejects the hard business realities in the first scenario: the need to solve problems, to manage uncertainty, to overcome resistance, to achieve profitability, and to compete successfully. But something else is happening in POB.

Positive organizational behavior "does not reject the value and significance of the phenomena in the first worldview. Rather, it emphasizes the phenomena represented in the second."³ A more recent review of POB described it like this:

Positive OB (POB) involves the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace.⁴

Most research, writing, and teaching have until recently focused largely on the first view described above. We choose to complement this traditional view with a more contemporary and clearly more positive and constructive approach in this chapter. We want to show you how identifying and applying the many positive attributes of individuals, groups, and organizations is yet another and especially powerful way of increasing your effectiveness *especially* in the business environment.

FIGURE 7.1 A MODEL OF POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

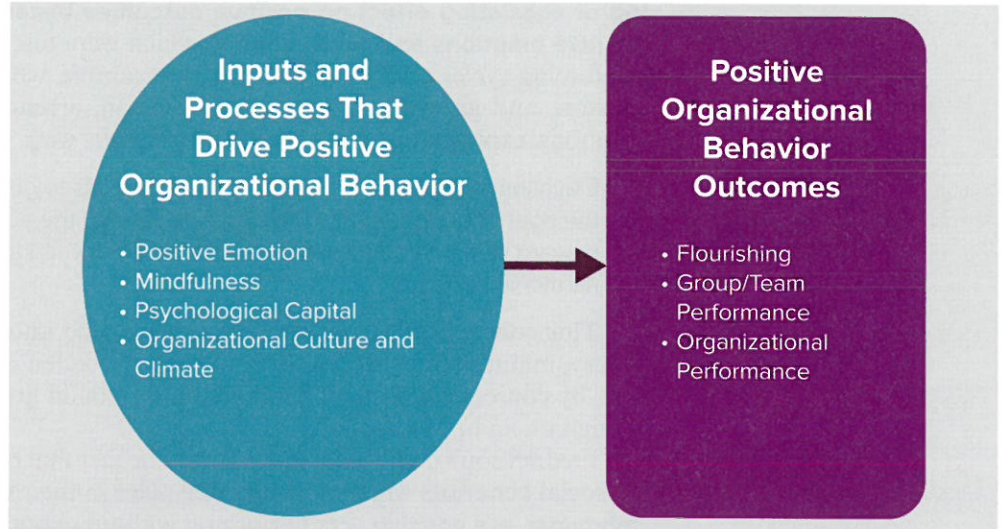
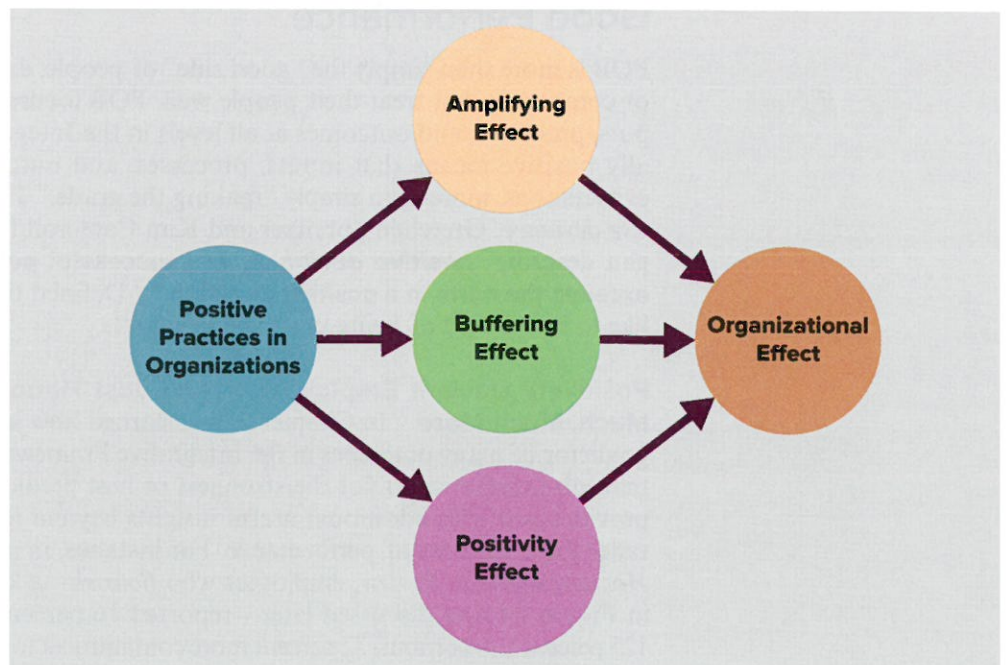


Figure 7.1 previews how this chapter organizes the topic. Certain inputs and a specific process from the Integrative Framework drive Positive OB. In turn, Positive OB is expected to elevate positive outcomes across the individual, group/team, and organizational levels.

How Positivity Works

Research on POB is relatively new and undeveloped, but it is growing quickly. Already we have enough evidence to support the conclusion that positive organizational practices drive outcomes across all three levels of the Integrative Framework.⁵ This conclusion in turn has generated interest in understanding how positive practices affect OB-related outcomes. Figure 7.2 illustrates this process.

FIGURE 7.2 THE FLOW OF POSITIVE INFLUENCE



SOURCE: Adapted from K. Cameron, C. Mora, T. Leutscher, and M. Calarco, "Effects of Positive Practices on Organizational Effectiveness," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, September 2011, 287. Reprinted with permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

Amplifying Effect In the **amplifying effect**, positive practices have an amplifying or escalating effect on positive outcomes because of their association with positive emotions and social capital, which were discussed in Chapter 1. Mutually reinforcing cycles of positivity occur, for example, when we observe kindness, compassion, and gratitude. Barbara Fredrickson, a renowned researcher on positive emotions, explained the amplifying effect in this way:

Elevation increases the likelihood that a witness to good deeds will soon become the doer of good deeds, then elevation sets up the possibility for some sort of upward spiral . . . and organizations are transformed into more compassionate and harmonious places.⁶

This conception of positive emotions is also known as the broaden-and-build theory, maintaining that positive emotions broaden one's attention and cognition, and, by consequence, allow the individual to build greater emotional well-being, as though on an upward spiral.

Fredrickson's description underscores the fact that people are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors when POB is taking place in their work environments. **Prosocial behaviors are positive acts performed without expecting anything in return.**⁷

Buffering Effect To buffer means to reduce or counteract the effects of something that is happening in our lives. In the **buffering effect**, positive practices buffer or reduce the impact of negative events and stressors. They do this by enhancing what is called psychological capital. As you will learn later in this chapter, *psychological capital* represents a set of personal characteristics that help us to flourish and be resilient in the face of adversity or challenging obstacles.

Positivity Effect The **positivity effect** "is the attraction of all living systems toward positive energy and away from negative energy, or toward that which is life giving and away from that which is life depleting."⁸ Organizations that use positive practices are more likely to create an atmosphere of positive energy, which in turn fuels increased performance.⁹

The Benefits of POB Extend beyond Good Performance

POB is more than simply the "good side" of people, examples of good performance, or companies that treat their people well. POB focuses on *exceptionally positive* inputs, processes, and outcomes at all levels in the Integrative Framework. Exceptionally positive means that inputs, processes, and outcomes are above and beyond expectations, more than simply "making the grade." This is often referred to as *positive deviance*. Gretchen Spreitzer and Kim Cameron from the University of Michigan describe **positive deviance** as "successful performance that dramatically exceeds the norm in a positive direction."¹⁰ Defined this way, we suspect you would like to be accused of being positively deviant!

Positively Deviant Employees Aren't Just Happy and Satisfied—They Are Much, Much More In Chapter 2, you learned how job satisfaction is an important predictor of many outcomes in the Integrative Framework. However, you also learned that job satisfaction is not the strongest or best predictor of job performance. POB provides you with additional useful insights beyond job satisfaction and other attitudes for predictors of performance. For instance, in a recent study published in the *Harvard Business Review*, employees who *flourish*—a key component of POB shown in Figure 7.1 and discussed later—reported 16 percent higher overall performance, 125 percent less burnout, 32 percent more commitment to their employers, and 46 percent more job satisfaction, and they missed less work.¹¹ These outcomes are compelling

TABLE 7.1 POB PRACTICES THAT FOSTER EMPLOYEE POSITIVITY

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES	DESCRIPTION AND BENEFIT
Provide decision-making discretion	Allowing employees to make decisions gives them a sense of control and greater opportunities for learning. (More on decision making in Chapter 11.)
Share information	Information helps employees see the impact of their work and see how it fits into the “big picture” (for example, vision and goals) of the organization.
Minimize incivility	Poor treatment, such as bullying described at the beginning of Chapter 2 and rude behavior, has dramatic negative effects on outcomes in the Integrative Framework and often leads to uncivil behavior by the victims. Organizations therefore need to select employees based on civility and take swift and appropriate action when incivility occurs. (More on this topic in Chapter 10.)
Provide feedback	Feedback can be both motivational and instructional (covered in Chapter 6).

SOURCE: Adapted from G. Spreitzer and C. Porath, “Creating Sustainable Performance,” *Harvard Business Review*, January–February 2012.

and beg the question, What can organizations do to foster such benefits? The answer can be found by studying Table 7.1.

Doing Well and Doing Good Positive businesses *do well and they do good*. They *do well* by being profitable and performing at a high level, but they also *do good* by making the well-being of their employees and other stakeholders (e.g., suppliers and communities) a priority. To elaborate, positive organizations empower, support, and develop employees because leaders believe that doing so is valuable in and of itself, in addition to meeting the expectations of shareholders. Kip Tindell, CEO of the Container Store, epitomizes this in his philosophy of the importance of employees:

One great employee is equal to three good. If you really believe that, a lot of things happen. We try to pay 50 to 100 percent above industry average. That’s good for the employee, that’s good for the customer, but it’s good for the company too, because you get three times the productivity at only two times the labor cost.¹²

Doing good can indeed enhance well-being, even when there is no monetary reward. And such behavior can happen at all levels in the Integrative Framework. On a personal level, you could drive your friend to the airport. Benefit to him: he doesn’t have to pay cab fare. Benefit to you: saving him money and spending time with a friend. The following Problem-Solving Application provides an excellent illustration of how an individual’s prosocial behaviors can affect an entire community:

solving application

problem

“Opportunity to Do Well and Do Good”—New Orleans Style!

Wendell Pierce has made his fame as an actor on popular TV shows—*The Wire* and *Treme*. He is a food aficionado, which is easy given that he is from New Orleans, which is known for its unique, blended cuisine.

Using What You Love to Help Others. Pierce combined his love of food and his home city into a new business venture—Sterling

Farms. This company provides fresh produce, salads, and other staples at affordable prices in supermarkets and convenience stores in urban New Orleans. However, this is not just another grocery venture aimed at capitalizing on an economic opportunity. As Pierce says: “It’s an opportunity to do well and do good . . . in the grocery business.”¹³



Actor Wendell Pierce tours one of his Sterling Farms stores with First Lady, Michelle Obama. Both have devoted themselves to improving nutrition for Americans.

“Growing Food in Deserts.”

Pierce and his two partners specifically target “food deserts,” or areas in the city in which residents are at least one mile away from fresh groceries. Such deserts exist in many cities and in New Orleans such deserts expanded due to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Many grocers never reopened. In fact, a study reported that 60 percent of low-income residents are at least three miles from a grocery

store and only 58 percent own cars.¹⁴

Fill the Need and Cover the Distances. Sterling Farms even provides free rides home for customers who spend more than \$50. This prevents them from needing to haul heavy groceries on a bus, in a taxi, or on foot.

Larger Motives. “Bringing in fresh food into these areas helps create economic growth,” Pierce

said. It “helps people understand that there’s value in eating better. It’s not something that’s only available in a better neighborhood.” Sterling Farms also is a way to preserve the food culture of this wonderful city. But he has larger aspirations too: “The most important thing to me is creating a relationship with the community, creating an economic engine for the community and access to quality groceries.”¹⁵

YOUR CALL Apply the 3-Stop Problem-Solving Approach.

Stop 1: How did Wendell Pierce define the problem?

Stop 2: Which inputs and processes from the Integrative Framework are evident in this example?

Stop 3: How did Pierce and his partners solve the defined problem? What are your reactions to the new venture?

Conscious Capitalism (CC)—Supercharged Corporate Social Responsibility

Some companies integrate POB throughout every aspect of their organizations, such as those that are known to practice **conscious capitalism** and incorporate four key principles:

1. Higher purpose (beyond profit maximization).
2. Stakeholder interdependence (rather than shareholder-centric).
3. Conscious leadership (instead of “carrots and sticks”).
4. Conscious culture (instead of bottom-line focused).¹⁶

Such “conscious” organizations have been shown to outperform the S&P 500 by a 9 to 1 ratio over a 10-year period!¹⁷ The spirit or philosophy of conscious capitalism is captured very well in the words of Whole Foods founder and CEO John Mackey. When asked about how to deal with business challenges, such as pressure to meet earnings targets, he said:

The first step for such a company is to clearly define its higher purpose beyond maximizing profits. It should then start to design everything it does around creating value for its stakeholders. It should get rid of all metrics that are not connected to value creation for stakeholders. It should then create new metrics that are leading indicators of future performance, measures such as employee passion and customer advocacy.”¹⁸

The following Problem-Solving Application describes how Whole Foods practices CC and how these practices are self-reinforcing.

As you can clearly see, the overriding and driving force of CC is a higher purpose beyond profit maximization. This enables organizations and their leaders to focus on priorities other than profit maximization. You’ll notice that CC companies

often make *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For list because they consistently value employees more than their competitors. They also tend to hold environmental and community responsibilities in a higher regard than most, and they walk the talk in terms of being stewards of people, planet, and profits. What would be your personal benefits of working for such a company? You might want to pursue a job at a CC company based on our discussion.

solving application

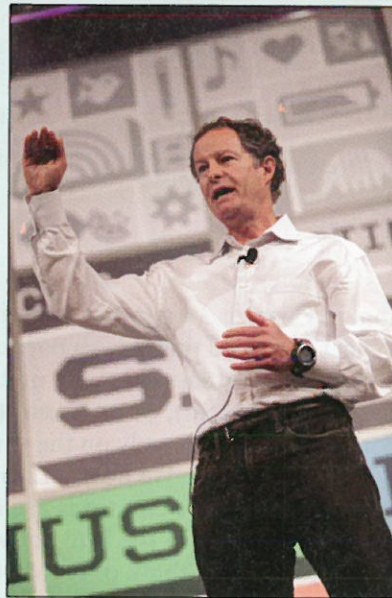
problem

Conscious Capitalism at Whole Foods

The company, based in Austin, Texas, is a perennial favorite on *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For list.¹⁹ One reason why is its transparency. Employees vote on every new hire and are able to see everyone's pay. Another reason is its CEO, John Mackey, and his approach to business, which he describes in a book, *Conscious Capitalism*. Fundamental to this notion is a higher purpose.

A Higher Purpose Is the Destination and the Vehicle. While you'll learn about visions and leadership in Chapter 13, a higher purpose is a very particular type of vision in conscious capitalism. It requires a focus on something other than profitability, shareholders, and economic gain. And it guides all other business activities.

Choose Talent Carefully. A clear and compelling purpose helps identify, attract, and hire the most appropriate new employees. But to assure they actually walk the



John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, wrote the book on conscious capitalism.

talk, new hires begin with a 30–90-day probationary period, at the end of which two-thirds of their team members must vote to keep them. Such conscious practices have resulted in a turnover rate of

less than 10 percent, which makes it easier to justify investments in employee development.²⁰

Teamwork Unlocks Creativity and Improves Decisions. “It’s deeply fulfilling for people to be part of a team, where their contributions are valued and the team encourages them to be creative and make contributions.”²¹ You’ll learn more about teamwork in Chapter 8, but teams can generate more than the sum of their parts. At Whole Foods teams create their own identities and names (e.g., Green Produce Monsters). They also make all of their own hiring, product, and compensation decisions.

Conscious Capitalism Is Self-Reinforcing. Purpose feeds talent, it guides and coheres teams, and both in turn help fulfill the purpose. Such continual reinforcement creates *positive spirals*, which we’ll discuss more later in the chapter.

YOUR CALL Apply the 3-Stop Problem-Solving Approach.

Stop 1: How did Mackey define the problem?

Stop 2: Which inputs and processes from the Integrative Framework are evident?

Stop 3: Would you want to work for a company that practices CC? Why or why not? Assume you were to start your own business. What would be three benefits of modeling after CC principles?

MAJOR QUESTION

What is the role of positive emotions in POB, and how can they make me more effective at school, at work, and in other arenas of life?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

At school, at work, or in your personal life, you've already seen how powerfully and sometimes unexpectedly emotions can arise. OB recognizes emotions as an important and ever-present individual-level process. In the section ahead you can see if your positive emotional experience matches our list and definitions of the 10 most common positive emotions. Then, you'll see how positivity is more than happiness and painting a smile on your face. You'll also find tips on how to foster your own positive emotions and how to apply them at school, work, and home.

Recall that in Chapter 3 we introduced emotions as relatively brief psychological and physiological reactions that have a particular target, such as a person (e.g., unethical and bullying boss), situation (e.g., a night out with your closest friends), event (e.g., scoring well on an exam), or nonevent (e.g., your forgot to brush your teeth). Our discussion then focused largely on the various types of negative emotions and how to manage their expression. We now turn our attention to positive emotions. Like their negative cousins, positive emotions are relatively flexible individual differences and are important processes in the Integrative Framework. And while it is true that you, like most people, simply think of emotions in terms of positive-negative, "I'm happy, I'm sad," you'll learn there is much more to the story.

Beyond Good vs. Bad

Positive and negative emotions are not polar opposites. The emotional world is not simply good versus bad. Negative emotions spur you to act in quite narrow or specific ways. Fear may motivate you to flee and anger may motivate you to fight. Positive emotions in contrast tend to broaden your mindset, open you to consider new, different, if not better alternatives when trying to solve a problem. If you think of emotions in this way, then you can see that negative emotions are limiting and positive emotions are resources that fuel individual, group, and organizational flourishing. (*Flourishing* is discussed in detail in the last section of this chapter.) Barbara Fredrickson explains positive emotions this way:

To get a feel for the ways positive emotions can build life resources, envision for a moment something that made you feel joyful, playful, or intensely alive—when you wanted to smile, cheer, or jump up and dance around. Maybe it was . . . sharing a meal with lots of laughter with a friend you haven't seen in ages . . . maybe it was dancing with the group of friends as your favorite band played. Whatever comes to mind for you, take a moment to relive the experience in your mind, letting joy rekindle. Consider how you felt and what you felt like doing. What we've learned about joyful experiences like these is that the playful urges they carry build resources, and in times of trouble, these gains in resources can help you in important ways—strengthen relationships, boost performance at school and work, and improve your health.²²

The bottom line: Positive emotions help you build social (e.g., relationships), psychological (e.g., well-being), and physical (e.g., lower stress and a healthy heart) resources that support your efforts and effectiveness in all arenas of your life—school, work, and family. Positive emotions also help combat negative emotions. Therefore, positive emotions are processes that influence many of the outcomes in the Integrative Framework. More than that, the benefits of positive emotions have been shown to endure over long periods of time.

Table 7.2 lists the 10 most common positive emotions from the most to the least frequently experienced. Love is a special case, however. Despite being at the bottom

TABLE 7.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE 10 MOST FREQUENT POSITIVE EMOTIONS

POSITIVE EMOTION	DESCRIPTION
Joy	Visualize this: your surroundings are safe and familiar. Things are going your way, even better than you expected at the moment. Choice requires little effort on your part. Colors are more vivid. There's a spring in your step. And your face lights up in a smile and with an inner glow.
Gratitude	Imagine you've realized that someone has gone out of his or her way to do something different. Your mentor gently steers your career in the right direction. Your physician goes out of her way to meet you at the office on the weekend. Gratitude opens your heart and generates an urge for you to give back, to do something good in return, either for the person who helped you work or for someone else.
Serenity	Like joy, serenity includes safe surroundings. Serene situations are familiar and require little effort on your part. But unlike joy, serenity is much more low key. It's when you went on a long, relaxing ride or walk, engaged in fulfilling conversation, or got wrapped up in a good book at the pool or beach while on vacation.
Interest	Something novel or different draws your attention, filling you with a sense of possibility or mystery. Unlike joy and serenity, the circumstances call for effort on your part. You're pulled to immerse yourself in what you're discovering.
Hope	Hope is different from most other positive emotions, which you experience when you're safe and/or satisfied. You are hopeful when something isn't going your way, but you believe that it can.
Pride	You know pride's evil cousins—shame and guilt—and the painful feelings that overcome you when you are to blame for something. Pride is the opposite; you're "to blame" for something good, something for which you can take credit or when you recognize that you made a positive difference to someone else. (However, unchecked pride is hubris.)
Amusement	Sometimes something unexpected happens that simply makes you laugh. Amusement is social; it most often happens in the company of and as a result of others. Heartfelt laughter often accompanies amusement.
Inspiration	Every so often, you come across true human excellence—people doing exceptional things. Feeling inspired rivets your attention, warms your heart, and draws you in. Inspiration doesn't simply feel good; it makes you want to act, to improve, or even to be the best that you can be.
Awe	Closely related to inspiration, awe happens on a grand scale. You literally feel overwhelmed. You feel small and humble. Awe makes you stop in your tracks. Sometimes people are awed by nature, such as the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls.
Love	Love is not a single positive emotion. It incorporates many of the others. When these good feelings stir our hearts within a safe, often close relationship, we call it love. Early stages of such relationships involve intense interest in everything and anything the person says. You share amusements and laughter together. As your relationship builds great joy, you begin to share your hopes and dreams for the future together. When the relationship becomes more solid, you experience serenity and can be proud of your partner's achievements, as if they are your own.

SOURCE: Adapted from B. L. Fredrickson, *Positivity* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009).

of the list, love actually is the most frequently experienced positive emotion. After reading and learning about each of the other positive emotions, you'll understand why it was inserted last in the table.

TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION—TAAP

Complete the following to apply your new knowledge regarding positive emotions.

1. Choose three emotions, other than love, from Table 7.2.
2. Now think of a time when you experienced each. What were the circumstances?
3. What were the benefits to you?
4. Did anybody else benefit? If so, how?
5. Think of ways you can create and experience each of these at either school, work, or home.

Positive Emotions Lead to Success at School, at Work, and in Life

People have often wondered and long debated whether happiness leads to success or vice versa. The answer is: both! Interestingly, however, recent research provides compelling evidence that positive emotions lead to or foster many desirable behaviors and outcomes:

- **Stronger social relationships.** Positive emotions energize others, make you more attractive, and are contagious.
- **Prosocial behaviors.** Positive emotions foster helping others, altruism, and openness.
- **Liking of yourself and others.** Positive emotions are linked to improved self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- **Stronger bodies and immune systems.** Positive emotions help lower stress hormones and blood pressure, pain, and the frequency of colds.²³
- **Original thinking.** Positive emotions enhance creativity, openness to more alternatives, and collaboration.²⁴

Many experiments and other forms of research reveal a compelling amount of evidence for the benefits of positivity and positive emotions. And while many are impressive, one in particular is worthy of specific note: That is that positivity begets positivity. It has been shown time and again that if you help somebody in a meaningful, or even small, way, he or she is more likely to help others. As Barbara Fredrickson says, “Beyond the dance of positivity between you and the person you helped, those who witness your good deed may well feel inspired, their hearts uplifted and elevated.”²⁵ This means that not only do you reap the benefits of helping somebody else, but that person also benefits, and so does the person he or she helps, and so on, and so on. This self-reinforcing and perpetuating aspect of positive emotions, and positivity more generally, is what leads to **upward spirals of positivity, where your positive behaviors, feelings, and attitudes feed your own and those of others in a continual, reinforcing process.**

How Much Positivity Is Enough?

We again want to underscore the valuable role of negative emotions—life is not all sunshine and roses. And forcing (or deluding) yourself to feel or act that everything is great all the time is absurd, if not pathological. Eternally rose-colored glasses certainly would undermine your effectiveness, health, and overall well-being. Even the

most positive person feels the intense emotional pain associated with experiences of loss and betrayal. Positive people get angry when they or others are treated unfairly. So this begs the question: How much positivity is enough?

Multiple Positives for Every Negative Thankfully, recent research gives you some guidance. While some researchers have argued for specific ratios of positive to negative, and others have disputed specific numbers, they all agree that positive and negative experiences are not equivalent.²⁶ This means that you can't simply remedy a negative experience with a positive one. Instead, to flourish and experience the benefits of POB discussed in this chapter you must have three, five, or more positive experiences for every negative. It also is helpful to know that you don't need to focus on which positive emotions you feel at a particular time; just be sure that you have multiple positives for every one negative

Fundamental to this idea of multiple positive emotions for every negative is the well-established fact that our brains respond differently to positive and negative experiences.

- **Negative experiences** activate a survival orientation, which leads us to be more responsive to negative information. Interestingly, our brains actually look more for negative information and stimuli over positive ones during daily activities.²⁷ This is probably one explanation for why managers tend to give more negative than positive feedback to employees.
- **Positive experiences** activate a supportive orientation, which leads us to be more responsive to positive information. This is part of the reason why managers, and people more generally, seem receptive to new ideas when they are in a "good mood."

This discussion underscores how important it is for managers to focus on the good things employees are doing, and for all of us to focus on the positive qualities of coworkers, classmates, partners, friends, and spouses. Practical advice on how to build your positive emotions follows in the next section.

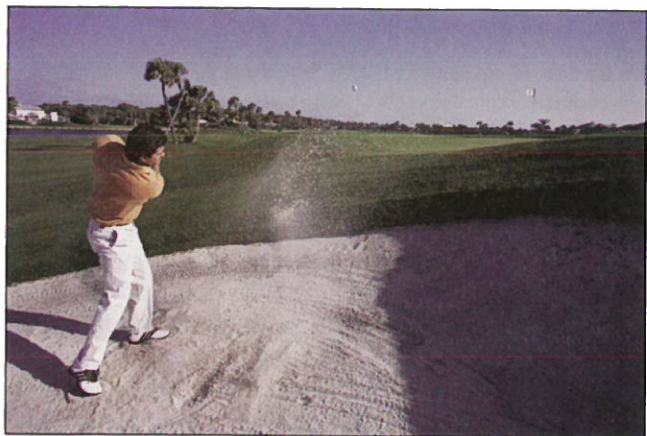
Strategies to Increase Your Positivity The following activities can help you increase your positive experiences and decrease your negative ones.²⁸

Create high-quality connections. Any social interaction, whether with family, coworkers, classmates, or the person ahead of you in line, is a chance to create a high-quality connection. Such connections are energizing and enhance your positivity. To transform ordinary interactions into high-quality connections, try the following tips:

1. **The only person in the room.** Engage the other person by being present, attentive, and affirming. Act as if he/she is the only person in the room.
2. **Support.** Do what you can to encourage the person and help him/her achieve a goal or attain success.
3. **Give trust.** Believe you can depend on this person to meet your expectations, and let it show.
4. **Goof off.** Play! Have no goals or intentions other than to goof off.

Cultivate kindness. Give yourself the goal of performing five new acts of kindness in a single day. Aim for actions that really make a difference and come at no cost to you. Assess what those around you might need most and make a plan, but execute your plan so that your acts of kindness all occur on the same day.

Develop distractions. One of the best ways to break from negativity is to distract yourself. The more attention a distraction requires the better. To do this, make two



Sports like golf are one way to "goof off" and have fun. To make this work, however, you need to enjoy the activity for the activity's sake. Too many people ruin the fun of playing golf by taking their scores too seriously.

lists: healthy distractions and unhealthy distractions. Brainstorm and think of ways—old and new—to distract yourself from negative thoughts. Be sure to try to think of things you can do at school, at home, or at work. Negativity can creep in anywhere and at any time; you therefore need your lists of distractions handy and practical. Healthy distractions could be going for a run, for a bike ride, or to the driving range. Unhealthy distractions might be drinking, food, TV, or video games. Be careful of these, and for each unhealthy one, challenge yourself to add another healthy distraction.

Dispute negative self-talk and thoughts. Get a stack of 3×5 cards and write your common negative thoughts or emotions about yourself, about a relationship, or about a situation at school, work, or home. Then, in a private place where nobody can hear you, read the cards one at a time. After reading each one aloud, then quickly, without thought, dispute or counter that negative thought. Beat it down and disprove it with something positive about yourself, the situation, or facts. Be sure to do this with enthusiasm, as it will build your conviction. Practice this. Your goal is to dispute negative thoughts as quickly as they enter your mind.

Platitudes = Fake = Bad Outcomes It is important for you to remember, however, that simply uttering positive words or forcing a smile isn't enough. Humans are excellent detectors of insincerity.²⁹ If your positivity is not heartfelt and genuine, then you will not reap any of the benefits discussed (e.g., improved performance, relationships, and health). Worse still, insincere attempts at positivity may even do harm, as others are likely to see your lack of authenticity, which can erode their trust in you and your influence and credibility with them. (Many of these topics are discussed in later chapters—influencing others in Chapter 12 and leadership in Chapter 13.) To apply this knowledge, and learn which positive emotions you experience, take Self-Assessment 7.1.



SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.1 What Is My Positivity Ratio?

Go to connect.mheducation.com and take Self-Assessment 7.1 to learn the ratio of your positive to negative emotions. Then do the following:

1. What is your reaction to the results?
2. Considering the individual differences (IDs) we discussed in Chapter 3, which ones do you think are contributing to your ratio?
3. Do others see you as more or less positive than your ratio suggests? Why?
4. If you do this for two different dimensions of your life (e.g., school and work), then to what do you attribute these differences?
5. Describe three things you can do to improve your positivity ratio for school.

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My Level of Positivity To make this discussion come to life for you, it is helpful to know the relative frequency of your positive to negative emotions. This knowledge can help you understand many things about yourself, such as how likely you are to reap the benefits of positive emotions and POB. Remember that emotions are short-lived and that any measure of your emotions captures only your feelings about a specific event, person, or dimension of your life at a particular point in time. We therefore encourage you to take the Self-Assessment for the past day of your life, which is intended to capture your positivity for life more generally. Then, do it focusing on school as your target. If you're working, calculate your ratio of positive to negative emotions for work and compare it to your ratio for life more generally. This will give you knowledge of your positivity in various arenas of your life and help you better understand this important personal resource.

MAJOR QUESTION

How can mindfulness contribute to my effectiveness?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

You may be more aware of mindfulness by its absence, that is, in the aftermath of when you realize you've done something foolish or thoughtless. You will be encouraged to learn that you can improve your focus and attention through practice. You're about to learn what inhibits mindfulness and two of the most effective techniques you can use to increase it.

The concept of mindfulness has been studied for over 30 years. It has historical roots in Buddhism in that it represents a state of consciousness that is cultivated through meditative practice. But mindfulness, just like meditation itself, is not tied to any religion. Psychologists are keenly interested in fostering mindfulness because it is positively associated with many indicators of physical and mental health. The field of OB, however, has only recently started to examine the concept.³⁰ We are discussing mindfulness in this chapter due to its potential to positively impact many of the outcomes in the Integrative Framework. For example, mindfulness will enhance your ability to use managerial skills associated with performance management like giving feedback, coaching, and recognizing others.

In this section, we discuss the difference between mindfulness and mindlessness, the inhibitors of mindfulness, the benefits of mindfulness, and techniques you can use to practice mindfulness.

Mindlessness vs. Mindfulness

Imagine that you are sitting in your seat during an airplane flight that is beginning its descent to your destination. Across the aisle, you notice that a two-year-old baby starts to cry due to altitude changes and the mother begins to soothe him. Suddenly, a man sitting in the same row as the crying baby tells the mom to “shut that (N-word) baby up.” Despite her attempts to quiet the baby boy, he continues to cry. Unexpectedly, the man reaches around and slaps the child in the face with an open hand, which results in louder screams from the baby, along with a scratch below the eye.

This alleged event occurred on a Delta Air Lines flight, according to the boy's mother and corroborated by another witness. The offensive man, Joe Rickey Hundley, pleaded guilty to a simple assault charge and was sentenced to 8 months in federal prison. He subsequently was discharged by his employer—AGC Aerospace & Defense.³¹

This is an example of *mindless* behavior, at the least. **Mindlessness “is a state of reduced attention. It is expressed in behavior that is rigid,” or thoughtless.**³² Mr. Hundley certainly wasn't thinking about the repercussions of his behavior, and he clearly failed to control his emotions, which is a key component of *mindfulness*. Mindlessness requires minimal information processing and we often do it rather automatically. In this case a man's emotional state apparently took complete control of him. A more common example would be driving to and from work. We get in the car, take off, and then all of a sudden we remember arriving at our destination wondering how we got there. Mindlessness can also be purposive when we refuse to “acknowledge or attend to a thought, emotion, motive, or object of perception.”³³

An example is forgetting someone's name 30 seconds after being introduced for the first time. A lack of attention simply sends the name into our pile of forgotten information. Not surprisingly, mindlessness is associated with poor mental and physical health, less satisfying relationships, and lower task performance.³⁴ Mindfulness is completely different.

Mindfulness is defined as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.”³⁵ In essence, mindfulness represents the extent to which we are *aware and attentive* to what is happening around us at a given moment. This awareness and attention pertain to both our inner (How am feeling at this moment? What am I thinking?) and outer (What are others feeling and doing? What is that noise? Who has the most power in this group?) worlds. Mindfulness requires effort because our brains work in ways that detract from staying focused. For example, we all have a “thinking mind” that likes to judge everything we see and hear. This leads to the “mental chatter” that detracts from the inner quiet needed to stay focused and aware of what is going on around us. Further, our minds have an automatic pilot of unawareness. It's simply easier to let the mind aimlessly wander around than it is to concentrate on the present moment. Left unchecked, the mind will drive us toward mindlessness.³⁶

Mindfulness improves our interpersonal communications because it keeps us focused on other persons we're involved with and the details of what they are saying. Herb Kelleher, former CEO of Southwest Airlines, was noted as a very mindful person. Here is what Doug Parker, CEO of US Airways, had to say about a typical interaction with Herb: “He is completely engaged and never looks over your shoulder to see who else is in the room. It's not out of principle; it's just who he is.” Mr. Parker told a *Fortune* reporter that he changed his approach to communicating with employees based on observing Mr. Kelleher. He has shunned large group meetings for smaller ones containing 30 or 40 people. He said that this enables him to be more attentive to employee needs and to “really” listen to their concerns.³⁷ Doug Parker's actions represent mindfulness in action.

Mindfulness requires attentional balance, which reflects your ability to maintain sustained, nonemotional attention in a specific situation. Does wearing headphones at work help or hinder attentional balance? The Example box below discusses some interesting conclusions about the use of headphones at work.

EXAMPLE Does the Use of Headphones Help Achieve Mindfulness?

More and more companies are allowing employees to use earbuds and noise-canceling headphones at work. Some people listen to music while others just want to reduce the general level of noise. The feeling among many employees is that it helps block distractions like loud coworkers, ringing phones, and machine-related noises. Not all companies agree with this conclusion, however, and some employers have banned their use.

LISTENING TO MUSIC WHILE STUDYING AND WORKING. Research on students provided little support for listening to music while studying. A study of Taiwanese students revealed that concentration levels went down when participants studied while listening to music with lyrics. Adult reading-test scores also were lower when people listened to hip-hop music while reading.

Neuroscientists believe that “listening to music with lyrics while trying to read or write can distract employees by overtaxing verbal-processing regions of the brain.” Dr. Robert Desimone, director of Brain Research at MIT, concluded that “the prefrontal cortex, the brain's control center, must work harder to force itself not to process any strong verbal stimuli, such as catchy lyrics, that compete with the work you're attempting.”³⁸

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES EXIST. Research shows that people pay more or less attention to music they like or dislike, respectively. In other words, we are more distracted by music we like. Familiar music that does not contain lyrics also was found to serve as a sound-blocker. Other individuals also benefit from noise-canceling headphones because they reduce the amount of high-frequency sound and general activity occurring in an office environment.

At the same time, the use of earbuds and headphones can cause conflict and resentment at work. It becomes hard for colleagues to get each other's attention when one or more people are listening to music or wearing noise-reducing headphones. This can lead people to throw things to get someone else's attention. Further, some people believe that the use of such equipment at work violates norms of etiquette.

DO HEADPHONES HELP? We would not recommend them when you are reading or studying. Otherwise, it seems that individual differences and office norms should rule.³⁹

YOUR THOUGHTS?

1. If you are going to listen to music while working, what artists or types of music would be most suitable for you?
2. What's your opinion about students who want to listen to music while studying?
3. Assume you're on a team project with other students; would it bother you if other team members wore headphones and listened to music? Explain.
4. What's your opinion about workers who want to listen to music at work?
5. Assume at work you're promoted to supervise a group of employees; would it bother you if some workers in the group wore headphones and listened to music? Explain.

Let's consider the inhibitors to attentional balance.

Inhibitors of Mindfulness

There are two key inhibitors of mindfulness: attentional deficit and attentional hyperactivity.⁴⁰ It is important to understand these inhibitors so that you can avoid them.

Attentional Deficit An **attentional deficit** reflects the inability to focus vividly on an object. This can easily occur in a classroom when students feel bored, listless, or uninterested in what is being discussed. Surfing the Internet during class certainly will contribute to this inhibitor. Attentional deficit also stems from a lack of sleep, a cold, conflicting priorities, or counterfactual thinking. Counterfactual thinking represents the tendency to think about "what could have been" or "what might be" as opposed to what is actually taking place or being said. The recommendation here is to stay focused on the moment and don't let your attention sway toward the past or the future.



Sometimes we become distracted instead of paying attention to the present moment. What might this boy miss by letting his attention sway from the ball game? A home run? A ball hit his way? It takes effort to stay focused on what is happening around us.

Attentional Hyperactivity *Attentional hyperactivity happens when our minds are racing or wandering, resulting in compulsive daydreaming or fantasizing.* This is also called “rumination.” For example, fantasizing about your lunch or evening plans during class prohibits you from paying attention to what your professor is saying. Research reveals that all of us do a lot of mind wandering on a daily basis.⁴¹ Bestselling author and psychology professor Daniel Gilbert estimates that people mind wander about 50 percent of the workday. Can you imagine the cost in terms of lost productivity? Gilbert’s research reveals that most mind wandering is centered on personal rather than business concerns.⁴² Mind wandering is likely to increase when we are highly aroused, such as drinking three Red Bull drinks before 10:00 am, or when we have a lot of commitments. The recommendation here is be aware when your mind wanders. When it happens, don’t be overly attentive to it and don’t be mad at yourself for doing it. Just give soft recognition to the fact that your mind is wandering and then return your focus to the present moment.

Benefits of Mindfulness

There are four broad benefits of mindfulness.⁴³

1. **Increased physical, mental, and interpersonal effectiveness.** This occurs because people are more aware of physical sensations, personal feelings, personal emotions, and the feelings and emotions of others.
2. **More effective communications.** Mindfulness fosters more effective listening, greater use of empathy, and more attention to nonverbal cues during conversations.
3. **More balanced emotions.** Paying attention to internal emotions and the emotions of others leads us to be more balanced and less reactive. This in turn helps reduce conflict with others.
4. **Personal effectiveness.** Mindfulness enhances your ability to contribute during class sessions or meetings at work, to provide social support to others, to ask for help when needed, and to develop and sustain loving relationships.

Recent OB research revealed that mindfulness was significantly related to several outcomes in the Integrative Framework. Specifically, mindfulness was positively associated with task performance, job satisfaction, and decreased emotional exhaustion. Given the newness of this concept within the field of OB, future research may uncover additional benefits of mindfulness.⁴⁴

Would you like to improve your overall well-being? How about the effectiveness of your social interactions and relationships? If yes, then you will gain valuable insight about enhancing your level of mindfulness in pursuit of these positive outcomes by taking the following Self-Assessment. It measures your level of mindfulness. You can use your scores to develop an improvement plan.



SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.2 What Is My Level of Mindfulness?

Go to connect.mheducation.com and take Self-Assessment 7.2. Then answer the following questions.

1. What questions reflect your greatest inhibitors? (Select the three items with the lowest scores.)
2. What is the cause of these inhibitors?
3. Examine the techniques listed in the next section and determine which one might be best suited for your needs. Start using the technique on a daily basis.

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Practicing Mindfulness

The goal of practicing mindfulness is to help you become more calm and collected in all circumstances. The 2009 book *The Leader's Way* explains: “When the mind is disturbed by anger, jealousy, hate, impatience, fear, lack of self-confidence, or negative emotions about things that happened in the past, it is wasting valuable time that instead should be used for constructive thinking.”⁴⁵ Practicing mindfulness helps you focus your mind on productive activities while constraining counterproductive thinking and mind wandering.

The good news is that mindfulness can be learned by using a variety of simple meditative techniques on a regular basis. Although there are many good books you can consult for details regarding these techniques,⁴⁶ we review two approaches that are easily learned: a breathing meditation and a walking meditation. Research shows that practicing short meditative techniques like these reduces stress and negative emotions, and increases emotional regulation, task performance, and memory.⁴⁷

The Wall Street Journal, covering the growing influence of meditation, interviewed Dr. Muali Doraiswamy, a psychiatry professor at Duke University Medical Center. He discussed the physiological process underlying the positive outcomes of mediation, which the *Journal* summarized as follows: “Some forms of meditation have been found to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which stimulates the body’s relaxation response, improves blood supply, slows down heart rate and breathing and increases digestive activity, he said. It also slows down the release of stress hormones, such as cortisol.”⁴⁸ You will find both physiological and cognitive benefits from practicing mindfulness. Give it a try!

Breathing Meditation Breathing meditations are easy and can be done almost anywhere. Focusing on breath reminds us of the “here and now” because it brings us back to a fundamental and vital function of life. This technique requires nothing more than just tuning into the feelings associated with breathing in and out. Two experts recommend the following simple approach for getting started:

- Place your hand on your stomach a couple of inches beneath the upside-down V at the center of your rib cage. Look down, breathe normally, and watch your hand. You’ll probably see it move only a little bit, and sort of up and down.
- Leaving your hand in place, now breathe in such a way that your hand moves out and back, perpendicular to your chest. Try to breathe into your hand with real oomph, so that it travels back and forth half an inch or more with each breadth.⁴⁹

Start out by trying these two steps for about 10–20 breaths. Once you are comfortable with this form of diaphragm breathing, you can take your practice to the next level with these additional instructions:

- Sit comfortably in a chair, feet firmly on the ground and your back relatively erect. Feel like you are a “proud mountain” of stability. Close your eyes and take a deep inhale that fills your belly and lungs. Now exhale, noticing how your belly contracts. Do this twice.
- Add counting to your breathing. Count to four or five as you both inhale and exhale. This will ensure that you take deep breaths. Try doing this for five minutes twice a day. You can extend the length of time you practice breathing meditations as you become more comfortable with the technique.

Your mind is likely to wander while using the above techniques. You also will notice sounds around you. Not to worry, it’s normal. When this happens, just acknowledge the thoughts and sounds and return your focus to your breath. Don’t try to chase the thoughts away or give them much attention. Just recognize the thoughts and sounds and let them pass. The thoughts will move away like a white cloud being moved by the wind in a blue sky.

Walking Meditation This is one of your authors' favorite forms of meditation because it can be done anytime you are walking, and no one will know that you are doing it. It's important to start this technique by forming an intention. **An intention represents an end point or desired goal you want to achieve.** In this context, the intention sends a signal to the mind that guides its attentiveness and awareness during the meditative practice.⁵⁰ A sample intention would be "I will focus on the act of walking while ignoring other sounds and thoughts." Begin walking keeping your intention in mind. Concentrate on the placement of one footstep after another. Feel the rhythmic nature of your steps. Focus on how it feels to lift and place your feet on the surface. Train your mind to be aware of your footsteps. Notice the speed at which you walk and the pressure being felt by your feet. Consider changing the length of your stride and notice how it feels. If your mind starts to wander or you begin thinking about something you have to do, just recognize the thought and then drop it. Return your attention and awareness to your intention, which is the act of walking. You will be amazed at what you can observe.⁵¹ Try this for five minutes.

Another variant of this technique involves taking a walk with a different intention. Examples are "I will focus on all sounds during my walk" or "I will focus on all smells during my walk." If you use an intention aimed at sound, begin walking and concentrate on what you hear. Listen for all types of sounds like footsteps, birds, mechanical objects operating, wind, tree branches rustling, voices, clanging of objects, airplanes, etc. The key is to allow your mind to focus on anything that can be heard. Again, recognize stray or wandering thoughts, and then let them passively go away by returning to your intention. Try this for five to ten minutes.

Practice Makes Perfect Mindfulness can be learned via practice, and the benefits are substantial. Google, General Mills, and McKinsey & Company recognize this conclusion by investing in company-sponsored training programs.⁵² Yes, it takes time, practice, and, most importantly, commitment. The above techniques can get you started, and you can consult additional resources noted above if you want to expand your practice. We would like to close with a thought by Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder and director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and professor of Medicine. Here is what Professor Kabat-Zinn had to say about meditation:

It is not some weird cryptic activity, as our popular culture might have it. It does not involve becoming some kind of Zombie, vegetable, self-absorbed narcissist, navel gazer, "space cadet," cultist, devotee, mystic, or Eastern philosopher. Meditation is simply about being yourself and knowing something about who that is. . . . Meditation is the process by which we go about deepening our attention and awareness, refining them, and putting them to greater practical use in our lives.⁵³

In summary, increasing your level of mindfulness is likely to positively impact the processes shown in the Integrative Framework, which in turn should foster positive outcomes across the individual, group/team, and organizational levels. We strongly encourage you to give it a try.

TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION—TAAP

- Begin by thinking of a time when you were not paying attention in class.
 1. What do you think was the cause of your lack of mindfulness? Was it due to attentional deficit or attentional hyperactivity?
 2. What can you do in class to stay focused on what is being discussed?
- Think of a time when you were talking with someone and you completely missed part of what the person said because your mind was wandering.
 3. How can you remain mindful in one-on-one conversations?

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL: CAPITAL THAT I OWN AND CONTROL

MAJOR QUESTION

How can my inner HERO benefit me at work and in my career?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Positive psychological capital is a relatively new concept in OB and is part of the POB movement. It is a key person input in the Integrative Framework. Often you'll find the concept explained in terms of its components: hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (HERO). So you're about to learn how to develop and benefit from your inner HERO or psychological capital.

Fred Luthans, a renowned professor at the University of Nebraska and POB expert, says that **those with high levels of *positive psychological capital (PsyCap)* have high levels of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO)**. They are characterized by the following:

- H Hope.** Persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed.
- E Efficacy.** Having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks.
- R Resilience.** When beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success.
- O Optimism.** Making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future.⁵⁴

Moreover, you can develop your PsyCap!

As we discussed in Chapter 3, individual differences that are relatively flexible (e.g., emotional intelligence) versus those that are fixed (e.g., intelligence) present opportunities for you and managers to harness, develop, and utilize them. It is important to understand the components of your PsyCap because it is flexible and it has been shown to predict many of the outcomes in the Integrative Framework in desirable ways, such as increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and well-being, and decreased intentions to quit, job stress, anxiety, and counterproductive work behaviors.⁵⁵ This section provides the information you need to develop your PsyCap and that of others.

Hope = Willpower + “Waypower”

You're probably thinking, “Of course I know what hope is; what else is there to know?” You also likely see yourself as more hopeful than the average person. If this is your view, then you might be surprised to learn that hope actually has two components. Knowledge about these components can help you understand why hope works, when it doesn't, and how to build it.

The two components of hope are *willpower* and *waypower*. This means to have **hope** you need to have a goal and the determination to achieve it (*willpower*), and you need to see one or more alternative paths to achieve your goal, even when faced with adversity (*waypower*).⁵⁶ The Example box on the next page highlights the role of willpower when entrepreneurs start and grow a business. Hope therefore requires both a goal and means for achieving that goal.

EXAMPLE It Takes Hope to Build a Business

Ben Horowitz, the renowned venture capitalist, puts a high premium on the willpower of entrepreneurs. Willpower, along with genius, are in his mind the two most crucial characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. "Building a company is hard and lonely. It demands relentless focus. And no matter how well you do, you must be ready to be pummeled again and again."⁵⁷ It takes willpower to persist. Horowitz himself demonstrated enormous willpower when Loudcloud, a previous venture he did with Marc Andreessen, nearly failed a half dozen times before ultimately being revived, strengthened, and sold to HP for \$1.6 billion. "Horowitz used 'force of personality and willpower to make a business out of it,' says Herb Allen III, the CEO of Allen & Co."⁵⁸

Brothers Bert and John Jacobs relied on willpower to start and grow their Life Is Good T-shirts company. The brothers started the company in 1989 by driving a used van up and down the East Coast selling T-shirts printed with their artwork. They survived on peanut butter and jelly and lived in the van. Showers were a rarity. After five years, they had \$78 in the bank, but that didn't cause them to give up.

Success started to come when the brothers concluded that "people seemed worn down by the media's constant focus on the negative side of information. That led to a keg party at our apartment where we put drawings up on a wall. We had done a lot of music-inspired, cool, funky designs. But when we asked friends to write notes next to the drawings, we got a lot of comments about one drawing [a stick figure that smiled]. We decided to pair the figure with the words LIFE IS GOOD and printed up 48 T-shirts with it. We went to a street fair and sold all of them in the first hour. It confirmed that people were craving something positive that focused on the good, instead of what's wrong with the world." The rest is history.

In 2012 the company started a partnership with Hallmark to develop and market greeting cards and stationery using the brothers' saying and artwork. The company also has partnerships with Smucker's and Plant Dog. Today the company has over \$100 million in annual revenue and 4,500 retail shops sell their wares.⁵⁹



Brothers John (on the left) and Bert Jacobs started Life Is Good T-shirts with very little resources. Through a combination of hope and the belief that optimism is powerful they built a \$100 million apparel business.

YOUR THOUGHTS?

1. Why is hope so important in starting and growing a business?
2. Did the Jacobs brothers display hope? How so?
3. Why do you think the Jacobs brothers did not give up after only having \$78 in the bank after five years of running their business?
4. Do you have the type of willpower needed to start and grow a business? Explain.

What you learned in Chapter 6 about effective goal setting can also assist you in building hope in yourself and others. The problem-solving approach we introduced you to starting in Chapter 1 is another helpful tool for building hope, as it can assist you in identifying both potential obstacles and support, as well as alternative feasible paths by which to reach your goal

TAKE-AWAY APPLICATION—TAAP

Complete the following to apply your new knowledge regarding hope.

1. Think of a situation at school, work, or home that you'd like to positively influence.
2. Now describe a specific goal you'd like to achieve.
3. Formulate a plan of action to achieve this goal.
4. To increase the level of hope for achieving your goal, think of a plan B or alternative to your first plan. These steps should make you more hopeful of having a positive influence.

Efficacy

We discussed efficacy in Chapter 3 and won't provide much detail here. But remember efficacy also is a component of your core self-evaluations (CSEs) and represents confidence in your ability to do something. As such, your self-efficacy influences how you perceive the world around you and your ability to deal with the inherent challenges and opportunities. Also remember from Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.3) that you can do many things to improve your self-efficacy. We'll explore how efficacy is related to your stress in detail in Chapter 16, but for now, just recall the example we provided in Chapter 3 of how your efficacy with public speaking affects your attitudes, performance, and stress related to this activity. Applying your knowledge of self-efficacy will help you realize its important role in your positive psychological capital—greater efficacy makes you both more confident and more positive.

Resilience

If you're **resilient** then you have the capacity to consistently bounce back from adversity and to sustain yourself in the face of the demands of positive events. This means that resiliency helps you when things go your way and when they don't—it is your built-in shield and recovery characteristic. Luthans and his colleagues stated that resiliency "is arguably the most important positive resource to navigating a turbulent and stressful workplace."⁶⁰ What gives resilience its power? Resilient people are open to new experiences, flexible to changing demands, and emotionally stable when confronted with adversity.⁶¹ Given these characteristics, resilience is a clear component of psychological capital and POB.

Optimism

Optimists are both realistic and flexible. Think about it. If you aren't realistic, then you are setting yourself up to fail. And if you fail too often, then even the most optimistic people lose their motivation and inspiration. Similarly, true optimists are flexible. This means that they are willing to revise their views as situations change.

(Recall the contingency approach to management discussed in Chapter 1?) To clarify, optimists don't see everything as positive. If they did they would be Pollyanna-ish or delusional. Recall also from Chapter 4 that particular ways of making attributions (i.e., the ways in which people perceive causes of events) characterize optimists, such that **optimists often view successes as due to their "personal, permanent, and pervasive causes, and negative events to external, temporary, and situation-specific ones."**⁶²

That said, did you ever wonder why people are optimistic in the first place? What function does it serve? One school of thought claims that optimism is self-inspiration—it is our mind's way of motivating us to move forward even if the future is uncertain. The rationale is that if humans didn't think that the future would be bright—an improvement over today—then they might be crippled with fear and uncertainty, never take risks, never better themselves or their situation. After all, humans have the unique ability to think ahead, and everybody knows they will die someday. And if the mind didn't have some way of combatting this, then many people would be stuck in or preoccupied with gloom (similar to those that suffer from severe depression), wouldn't save money or invest in children. Therefore, a belief that things can or will be better in the future not only helps keep our minds at ease, but also reduces stress (discussed in Chapter 16) and helps us paint our decisions in a positive, appealing light. It keeps us moving forward. For example, optimism helps motivate us to continue to achieve and progress at work because



Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix, is an entrepreneurial optimist. He left the military to work for the Peace Corp. He then started his first company, Pure Software, and left it to co-found Netflix in 1997. Netflix has experienced tremendous growth under Hastings' leadership.

some people become CEOs and fabulously wealthy (like Reed Hastings and Mark Zuckerberg). Many people pursue such aspirations even though the probability of becoming a billionaire is infinitesimally small. In contrast, optimism also motivates most people to get married, despite the fact that in America 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. Scientists argue that optimism is part of what alters our views of the likely outcomes (probabilities) in our lives and motivates us to act.⁶³

How I Can Develop My PsyCap

Like human and social capital in Chapter 1, PsyCap is a form of capital that is valuable to develop. It can help you flourish in your personal life and work life. The good news is that the PsyCap components are mutually reinforcing—developing one often helps develop the others. Try putting the following recommendations into practice in order to develop your PsyCap.

- **Hope development.** Generate a work-related goal that is important to you, attainable yet challenging; create multiple plans for achieving this goal. Share these with others—coworkers or classmates—to get their feedback and recommendations.
- **Efficacy development.** Besides recommendations from Chapter 3, break your larger goal into smaller subgoals as discussed in Chapter 6. Create plans for achieving the subgoals and share them with others to get feedback and recommendations.
- **Resilience development.** Make a list of your personal talents, skills, and social networks (recall our discussion of social capital in Chapter 1); specify how these can be used to help you achieve your goal; identify potential obstacles and determine how to avoid or reduce their impact.⁶⁴
- **Optimism development.** Hope development bolsters your optimism, but it also is helpful to identify obstacles and negative expectations. On your own, check to see if those that you identify are valid, and then have others challenge your assumptions.

We conclude this section with a Self-Assessment of PsyCap. Learning your personal PsyCap score can help you understand and improve your ability to find a job (job search efficacy), increase your creativity and innovativeness, and reduce the stress in your life.⁶⁵ Your score will also serve as the basis for developing hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism, as described above.



SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.3 What Is My Level of PsyCap?

Go to connect.mheducation.com and complete Self-Assessment 7.3. The four scores obtained after completing Self-Assessment 7.3 represent your hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism, respectively. Then answer the following questions:

1. Which is the highest? Lowest? Complete the PsyCap development protocol described above and be sure to utilize your highest/strongest component and pay extra attention to the development of the lowest/weakest.
2. In the Integrative Framework identify a process at all three levels—individual, group, and organizational—that PsyCap is likely to influence.
3. Describe one thing you can do to further develop each component of your PsyCap.

Adapted from F. Luthans, C. M. Youseff, and B. J. Avolio, *Psychological Capital: Developing the Human Competitive Edge*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006.

MAJOR QUESTION

How can managers create an organizational climate that fosters Positive OB?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

OB has a term for how you and your cohorts might view the school you attend or the workplace you share: *organizational climate*. As you see in the Integrative Framework, displayed at the beginning of this chapter and in Figure 7.1, this input operates along with other environmental characteristics. But what factors contribute to the organizational climate? You're about to find out.

Just as a car needs gasoline or electric power to run, Positive OB needs the right environment in order to flourish. OB scholars discuss the “right environment” in terms of what is called organizational culture and organizational climate. We focus on organizational climate in this section because organizational culture is thoroughly discussed in Chapter 14.

Organizational climate is defined as employees' perceptions “of formal and informal organizational policies, practices, procedures, and routines.”⁶⁶ In plain language, organizational climate represents employees' beliefs about what they “see” going on at work and beliefs about “what” is happening to them. These perceptions can range from positive and uplifting to negative and debilitating. Obviously, positive climates are more likely to create the type of environment needed for Positive OB to take root in an organization.

Figure 7.3 presents a model outlining the key contributors to an organizational climate that fosters Positive OB: organizational values, organizational practices, and virtuous leadership. Let us consider each of these contributors.

Organizational Values

We defined *values* in Chapter 2 as abstract ideals that guide one's thinking and behavior across all situations. In the current context, organizational values represent the ideals that are endorsed, shared, and supported by the organization as a whole. A team of researchers identified three global values that are essential for promoting Positive OB (see Figure 7.3). Each one is defined below.⁶⁷

1. **Restorative justice** reflects “a shared belief in the importance of resolving conflict multilaterally through the inclusion of victims, offenders, and all other stakeholders.”⁶⁸ Organizations that subscribe to this value tend to resolve conflict by giving all parties a chance to express their thoughts and feelings. This in turn leads to healing when there has been hurt or offense, thereby producing solutions that focus on the greater good.
2. **Compassion** is a shared value that drives people to help others who are suffering. It is associated with behaviors related to sympathy, kindness, tenderness, warmth, and love.⁶⁹
3. **Temperance** is a shared belief in showing restraint and control when faced with temptation and provocation. It promotes self-control, humility, and prudence. All told, temperance helps people to avoid egocentric and heated emotional responses in favor of patience and restraint.

FIGURE 7.3 CREATING A CLIMATE THAT FOSTERS POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR



Organizational Practices

Organizational practices refer to a host of procedures, policies, practices, routines, and rules that organizations use to get things done. Figure 7.3 shows that training programs, support programs, and human resource practices and policies represent three key sets of practices that impact organizational climate.⁷⁰ For example, safety training not only reduces accidents, but demonstrates to employees that the organization cares about their well-being. Companies like General Motors, Hyatt, Charles Schwab, American Airlines, MGM Resorts International, and AIG offer progressive human resource practices to support “inclusion and diversity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees. These progressive corporations, and hundreds like them, have not only adopted policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, they are also offering equivalent medical benefits for same-sex partners and, in many cases, insurance coverage for gender reassignment surgery.”⁷¹

The point to remember is that employees have greater commitment, satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and performance, and lower absenteeism and intentions to quit, when they believe that organizational practices support them professionally or personally.⁷² Consider the practices used by Boston Consulting Group and Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants in San Francisco. Boston Consulting Group relies on a “red zone report” to identify when people “are working too many long weeks.” New employees also “can delay their start date by six months and receive \$10,000 to volunteer at a nonprofit.” Management at Kimpton Hotels “sends flowers and gift baskets” to employees’ loved ones when they have to work excessive hours. “It also hosts fireside chats with top executives and has rewarded great work with spa days, extra paid time off, and flat-screen TVs.”⁷³

Virtuous Leadership

Virtuousness represents “what individuals and organizations aspire to be when they are at their very best.”⁷⁴ The focus of virtuous leadership is to help individuals, groups, and organizations to elevate, enrich, and flourish. Although Chapter 12

provides a broad discussion of leadership, we consider it here due to its significant relationship with organizational climate.⁷⁵

It is important to note that virtuous leadership will not positively affect organizational climate unless it is voluntarily done as an end in itself. In other words, something is virtuous only when it is done for the purpose of creating positive deviance. For example, if kindness is displayed for the sole reason of getting someone to help you, then your actions become manipulation rather than kindness.⁷⁶ Let us examine the key components of virtuous leadership and its consequences.

Components of Virtuous Leadership OB scholars have proposed a variety of traits and individual differences that underlie virtuous leadership. The four shown in Figure 7.3 were selected because they are most frequently discussed in OB research. Virtuous leaders are more focused on the *greater good* than self-interest. They tend to do things that benefit the largest number of people possible. For example, Antony Jenkins, CEO of Barclays PLC, decided to dismantle “a self-serving and aggressive culture by abolishing commissions on financial-product sales, among other things.” He felt that the incentive system was fostering individualistic rather than collective behavior, which ultimately led to misconduct among employees.⁷⁷

Virtuous leaders tend to promote *trust* by making sure that their words match their actions. They walk the talk. Trust also is enhanced by treating people with respect and dignity. *Integrity*, which reflects living a life guided by morals and honesty, is surely going to foster Positive OB. Consider the case of Suzanne Garvin.

Suzanne Garvin, a personal banker in Los Angeles, tells of an instance in which she mistakenly drew a large check from the wrong account. Her supervisor, a kindly looking older lady, had blown by Garvin’s desk and initialed the check without looking at the account number. When the error was discovered, the supervisor obscured her signoff and tried to blame Garvin. (She’d kept a photocopy of the check and quietly presented it during the inquisition that followed.) “Our bosses were disturbed and assured me they would look into it,” recalls Garvin. Yet the punishment was slight; just a brief talking to, no more.⁷⁸

This episode reduced the trust between Garvin and her boss and with senior management. This example shows how a lack of virtuous leadership undermines attempts at creating Positive OB.

The final component of virtuous leadership, **forgiveness**, is defined as “the capacity to foster collective abandonment of justified resentment, bitterness, and blame, and, instead, it is the adoption of positive, forward-looking approaches in response to harm or damage.”⁷⁹ In addition to promoting Positive OB, forgiveness can affect your health. Research shows that *unforgiveness* is associated with adverse health conditions like poor immune system functioning, cardiovascular disease, and premature death.⁸⁰



Mike Rice, former coach of Rutgers, was fired because of his behavior toward basketball players. Would you like to be coached by someone who threw basketballs at players during practice? Can people learn to be more virtuous?

Effects of Virtuous Leadership Historically, there is little research on this important topic. More recently, however, several studies done at the organizational level of analysis demonstrated that virtuous leadership was related to outcomes like financial performance, customer satisfaction, positive organizational climate, and subjective measures of organizational effectiveness over periods of one to two years later.⁸¹ In contrast, a lack of virtuous leadership negatively affects individuals and organizations alike. Consider what happened at Rutgers University. Head basketball coach Mike Rice was fired after a video surfaced showing him “kicking players and throwing basketballs at them while using gay slurs.” The athletic director subsequently resigned and the university is experiencing backlash from the investment community. Investors of state and local bonds have demanded “extra yield to own university securities since the video of Rice made headlines.”⁸² Remember, both positive and negative emotions spread, but negative emotions and information spread faster.

MAJOR QUESTION

What can I do to enhance my level of flourishing?

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Asked what you want out of life, you might reply that you want to be happy. One early leader in the positive psychology movement eventually went beyond that goal and proposed another goal: *Flourishing*. You may find this broadened goal to include even more of your true aspirations. Flourishing, a key individual-level outcome in the Integrative Framework, includes five elements. They are positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (PERMA).

Martin Seligman, a renowned psychologist from the University of Pennsylvania, has been studying happiness and well-being for over 30 years. He is credited as being the driver of today's positive psychology movement, which is the forerunner of research on Positive OB.⁸³ Seligman originally believed that happiness was the most important outcome in our lives. He changed his mind over the years. He now feels that people equate happiness with being cheerful, and you don't have to be cheerful to be physically or psychologically healthy. He also was discouraged by methods used to assess happiness because they were strongly determined by the rater's immediate mood. Quite simply, the concept of happiness turned out to be too narrow for evaluating a person's overall well-being and it was very difficult to accurately measure. We know as OB researchers that you can't study and change something if you can't measure it.

These observations led Seligman to change his view of well-being. He equates well-being to the weather. There is not one unique component that defines our weather. Rather, it combines several *measurable* factors such as temperature, level of humidity, and wind speed. The same is true of our well-being. **Well-being is the combined impact of five elements—positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement (PERMA).** There is one essential consideration to remember about these elements. We must pursue them for their own sake, not as a means to obtain another outcome. In other words, well-being comes about by freely pursuing one or more of the five elements in PERMA.⁸⁴

Flourishing represents the extent to which our lives contain PERMA. When we flourish, our lives result in “goodness . . . growth, and resilience.”⁸⁵ We should all strive to flourish because of its association with other positive health outcomes like lower cardiovascular risk, lower inflammation, longer life, greater REM sleep, and positive mental health.⁸⁶ PERMA elements also are positively related to other important outcomes in the Integrative Framework—task performance, career satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. Managers also should care about employees' level of flourishing because it is positively related to outcomes at both the group/team level—team performance—and the organizational level—overall productivity and financial performance.⁸⁷ Interestingly, Jerome Dodson, fund manager for the Parnassus Workplace Fund, is using the extent to which a company has a flourishing environment as one criterion for selecting investment opportunities (see the Problem-Solving Application).

solving application

problem

Ethical Investing

The Parnassus Workplace Fund was started in 2005 by Jerome Dodson. In 2013 the fund had \$312 million invested in 35 holdings. Dodson's initial investment philosophy for this fund was grounded in the belief that ethical companies with positive working environments are good investments. Dodson said that "it made a lot of intuitive sense to me that companies that treat their employees well should in return get

good efforts from their employees and they should be more successful as a business."⁸⁸ Dodson admits that he makes investment decisions by integrating old-fashioned financial research with information obtained from interviewing managers and employees from companies under consideration. He also assesses the "positivity" of work environments by examining annual rankings contained in independent

sources such as *Fortune* and *Working Mother*.

Let's consider whether Dodson's philosophy holds up by comparing returns achieved by the Workplace Fund versus the S&P 500. Dodson's fund realized 19.8%, 13%, and 12.5% gains for one-, three-, and five-year periods. In contrast, the S&P 500 obtained returns of 7.7%, 1.7%, and 6.9% during these same time periods.⁸⁹

YOUR CALL Apply the 3-Stop Problem-Solving Approach.

Stop 1: What is the problem Mr. Dodson faced?

Stop 2: Use the Integrative Framework to explain why flourishing environments lead to financial performance.

Stop 3: Do you think Dodson's philosophy will stand the test of time? Explain.

We now consider the elements contained in PERMA. As you read, keep in mind that research suggests that less than 20 percent of U.S. adults flourish.⁹⁰ Sadly, this statistic suggests that many American adults are languishing. We hope that this section provides insights into enhancing your level of flourishing.

Positive Emotions

Although we thoroughly discussed positive emotions in the last section, there is one aspect of Barbara Fredrickson's "broaden and build" theory that we want to repeat because it enhances your ability to experience the other components of PERMA. Positive emotions *broaden* your perspective about how to overcome challenges in your life, such as the emotion of joy is more likely to lead you to envision creative ideas during a brainstorming session. Positive emotions also *build* on themselves, resulting in a spreading of positive emotions within yourself and with others around you. For instance, thinking lovingly about someone in your life is likely to activate other positive emotions like gratitude and interest. These emotions in turn foster the desire to play, explore, and savor time with loved ones.⁹¹

Our students report two interesting comments when we talk about positive emotions. First, they view positive emotions as something that "happens to them" rather than something they "create." Secondly, they sometimes find it hard to be positive given all their commitments and activities. Although both of these comments are partly accurate, they can be overcome by following Martin Seligman's suggestions for *proactively* increasing positivity in your life. Try this one after reading about it. Close your eyes and envision the face of someone still alive who helped you in the past. It should be someone who made a major impact on your life, and someone that you never properly thanked. Now imagine meeting that person next week face-to-face. Are you feeling gratitude?

The emotion of gratitude makes us happy and satisfied. We also strengthen relationships with others—the “R” component in PERMA—when we express gratitude to others. The problem with showing gratitude is that we frequently do it quickly with a passing “thank you.” This approach can appear meaningless. Instead, Seligman recommends using a “Gratitude Visit.” Here is how it works.

Write a letter of gratitude to someone and deliver it in person. The letter should be about 300 words: be specific about what the person did and how his/her actions affected you. Punch up the level of appreciation. Next, call the person and tell him/her that you would like to meet, but don’t indicate why. When you meet, read the letter word for word. If the person interrupts, ask him/her to please wait until you finish reading. Once you are done reading, discuss the content of the letter and your feelings for each other. Seligman’s research shows that people feel happier and less sadness over time after using this technique.⁹²

Engagement

We thoroughly discussed the topic of employee engagement in Chapter 2. You may recall that engagement reflects the extent to which you are physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved with an activity, task, or project. Being engaged in something has been referred to as being in the “zone” or in a state of “flow.” **Flow “is defined as the state of being completely involved in an activity for its own sake.”**⁹³ Flow is a positive state because well-being is positively impacted by deep attention and engagement with an activity. A recent study of flow over a four-day period, for instance, revealed that people were more energized in the evenings if they experienced flow during the workday.⁹⁴

Engagement and positive emotions are not one and the same. For example, when we are *in flow*, we are not necessarily thinking about anything; we are just doing! Our concentration is so high during flow that we use all of our cognitive and emotional resources needed for thought and feelings. This conclusion underscores the point that you can create positive emotions much easier than flow.

How can you create engagement or flow for yourself? Seligman and others suggest that this is a two-part sequence that involves (1) identifying your signature strengths and (2) learning to use them in daily personal and work activities. For us, working on this book, teaching, and playing golf put us into flow. Once you identify your strengths, you also can work with your manager to determine how these strengths can be incorporated into your job. If you are interested in identifying your strengths, we encourage you to take the strengths Self-Assessment created by Martin Seligman and his colleagues.



SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.4 What Are My Signature Strengths?

Would you like to be more engaged with your school, work, and leisure activities? If yes, then this assessment will help you because it identifies your signature strengths that must be present for you to experience flow. You can use your scores to assess how you might build your strengths into your daily activities.

Go to www.authentic happiness.org and take the free self-assessment. Then consider the following questions:

1. What are your highest strengths?
2. What are your weaknesses (i.e., the components with the lowest scores)?
3. Which of your strengths are you using on a daily basis?
4. What can you do to incorporate your strengths into your school, work, and leisure activities?

Relationships

Think of the last time you boisterously laughed, the last time you felt joyous, or the last time you felt inspired or experienced awe. Were you with someone else in each case? We suspect so because positive emotions often are associated with activities involving others.

Biologists have concluded that we are creatures of the hive. After studying insects such as wasps, termites, and ants, researchers concluded that “the group” is a natural unit of selection. In other words, insects and people both like to be in groups and to collaboratively work with others in getting things done. For insects, it’s the building of a fortress or hive, and for us its activities like completing tasks and projects, socializing, sharing memories, and traveling.

While others sometimes get on our nerves, positive relationships are a strong contributor to our well-being. They buffer us from stressors and provide resources that enable us to more effectively get things done. Positive relationships fuel the giving and receiving of social support. **Social support is the amount of perceived helpfulness derived from social relationships.** We receive four types of social support from others.

- *Esteem support.* Providing information that a person is accepted and respected despite any problems or inadequacies.
- *Informational support.* Providing help in defining, understanding, and coping with problems.
- *Social companionship.* Spending time with others in leisure and recreational activities.
- *Instrumental support.* Providing financial aid, material resources, or needed services.⁹⁵

The above discussion suggests that your level of flourishing is enhanced by seeking social support. You also will flourish by providing support to others, particularly in the form of kindness. Research reveals that the exhibition of kindness produces significant increases in well-being. We therefore want to encourage you to conduct a kindness exercise. Simply do a completely unexpected thing for someone else. It can



What types of support do you see in this photo of the aftermath of the Boston marathon bombing? What other aspects of PERMA would be activated by helping others in a tragedy like this?

be as simple as holding a door open for another to pass through or helping someone with directions. Then notice how you feel. You should experience one or more positive emotions.

Meaningfulness

Viktor Frankl, an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist who survived the Holocaust, was a strong proponent of using meaningfulness to promote well-being. His best-selling book *Man's Search for Meaning* chronicled his experiences in concentration camps and summarized what he learned from these events. His conclusion was that “striving to find a meaning in one’s life is the primary motivational force” for people.⁹⁶ In other words, it is the drive to find meaning in our lives that instills us with a sense of purpose and motivation to pursue goals.

Meaningfulness is defined as “belonging to and serving something that you believe is bigger than the self.”⁹⁷ In our case, for instance, we derive meaning from writing this book because we believe that it can positively enrich your life and help you to manage others more effectively. The concept of meaningfulness is both subjective and objective. For example, we had a past colleague who hated teaching undergraduate students. In contrast, we love teaching undergraduates. For our colleague, teaching undergraduates was not meaningful, but it was and is for us! Objectively, we also derive meaning when we read student feedback and teaching evaluations. There is nothing more satisfying than hearing that we impacted a student’s life.

We have three suggestions for building meaning into your life.

1. **Identify activities you love doing—you have a passion for them.** Then try to do more of these activities or find ways to build them into your work role. This will create a sense of purpose for you. Some jobs are so vital that they inherently foster a strong sense of meaningfulness. Consider the case of Michelle Catts at America’s largest nuclear power plant in Arizona.

By 6 am, Michelle Catts is making her way to the office past guards armed with automatic weapons, ultrasensitive X-ray machines, electronic gates and sensors that sniff out explosives. . . . Catts is one of our Nuclear Regulatory Commission inspectors at the plant serving as government watchdogs to make sure Arizona Public Service Co. finds problems before they affect safety. . . . “My job every day is to make sure this plant is operating safely,” Catts said. “That’s a pretty important job. It’s a good feeling at the end of the day to know I found important things to ask about.”⁹⁸

2. **Find a way to build your natural strengths into your personal and work life.** Your signature strengths were assessed earlier in Self-Assessment 7.4.
3. **Go out and help someone.** Research shows that people derive a sense of meaningfulness by helping others. We also should note that people with high meaningfulness in their lives are more likely to help others.⁹⁹ All told, helping others creates the upward spiral of positivity discussed earlier in this chapter.

Achievement

This component of PERMA pertains to the extent to which you have a self-directed “achieving life.” In other words, we flourish when we pursue achievement for its own sake. Doing so fosters feelings of mastery, which in turn enhances our self-esteem and self-efficacy. Qualcomm, ranked as the 32nd best company to work for by *Fortune* in 2014, attempts to encourage achievement among its technology employees. The company encourages employees to submit innovative ideas in research papers. In 2012, engineers submitted nearly 200 papers, and winners of best paper submissions were asked to present at a forum and other speaking engagements.¹⁰⁰ McDonald’s is

another company that has been trying to help employees achieve, but they are taking a different approach than Qualcomm (see Example box).

EXAMPLE McDonald's Helps Employees to Flourish

In the United Kingdom, McDonald's spends around \$55 million a year to help employees acquire nationally recognized academic qualifications in things like math and English. The company has awarded about 35,000 such certifications since the start of the program in 2006. McDonald's is one of the largest apprenticeship providers in the country.

McDonald's also invests heavily in both executive level training and management training to "restaurant general managers, department managers, and shift managers who, as the day-to-day leaders on the front lines, are taught the communications and coaching skills they need to motivate crews and to hit their shift's sales targets. The return on the company's investment is measured not in terms of increased revenue or profitability but in lower turnover of hourly managers and their crews. Turnover has declined steadily since the programs were initiated." McDonald's consistently has been ranked as one of the top 50 best workplaces by the Great Place to Work Institute.¹⁰¹

YOUR THOUGHTS?

1. If you worked on the Problem-Solving Application Case at the end of Chapter 6, you saw McDonald's in a less favorable light, at least for customer service in the United States. How could a company have a problem with customer service and still be a great place to work?
2. How does investing in academic certifications and management development contribute to flourishing among McDonald's employees?
3. What are notable examples you've seen at school or work to help people flourish?



McDonald's invests heavily in training, which is evidenced by McDonald's Hamburger Universities, one in Chicago, Illinois, and another in Shanghai. The rationale is that improving employees' knowledge and skills will boost their achievement, and thus their flourishing and its benefits at work.

what did i learn?

In our coverage of positive organizational behavior in this chapter, you learned that Positive OB focuses on creating work environments in which people flourish and that there are a number of techniques you can use to increase positivity even at an individual level at school and home. Reinforce your learning with the Key Points below. Then consolidate your learning using the Integrative Framework. Challenge your mastery of the material by answering the Major Questions in your own words.

Key Points for Understanding Chapter 7

You learned the following key points.

7.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE OB

- Positive OB emphasizes positive emotion, mindfulness, psychological capital, and organizational culture and climate to foster flourishing and performance across all three levels of OB.
- POB operates via three principle effects: *amplifying*, *buffering*, and *positivity*. These combined generate positive outcomes.
- Conscious capitalism is a business philosophy and approach to POB that involves a higher purpose, stakeholder interdependence, conscious leadership, and conscious culture.

7.2 THE POWER OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- Negative emotions cause you to narrow your focus while positive emotions cause you to broaden your thinking.
- Positive emotions are associated with stronger social relationships, prosocial behaviors, stronger bodies and immune systems, and original thinking.
- Research shows that you need multiple positive experiences to overcome or compensate for each negative.

7.3 FOSTERING MINDFULNESS

- Mindlessness is a state of reduced attention while *mindfulness* is fostered by paying attention to the present moment in a nonjudgmental way.
- Two key inhibitors of mindfulness are attentional deficits and attentional hyperactivity.
- Mindfulness can be learned by using a variety of simple “meditative” techniques on a regular basis.

7.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL: CAPITAL THAT I OWN AND CONTROL

- Positive psychological capital is comprised of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism.
- Hope includes not only a goal and determination to achieve it, but also one or more clear paths for achieving your goal.
- Resilience is your ability to bounce back after adversity and sustain yourself.
- Optimism attributes positive events to personal, permanent, and pervasive factors.

7.5 CREATING A CLIMATE THAT FOSTERS POSITIVE OB

- Organizational climate represents employees’ perceptions of an organization’s policies, practices, procedures, and routines.
- Positive organizational climates are a function of organizational values, organizational practices, and virtuous leadership.
- Positive climates are driven by values pertaining to (1) restorative justice, (2) compassion, and (3) temperance.
- The key components of virtuous leadership include a focus on the greater good, trust, integrity, and forgiveness.

7.6 FLOURISHING: THE DESTINATION OF POSITIVE OB

- Flourishing reflects the extent to which our lives contain five elements indicated by the acronym PERMA: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement. It is a key outcome in the Integrative framework.
- Engagement and positive emotions are not one and the same. Engagement can be increased by using your signature strengths in everyday activities.
- Four key types of social support include esteem support, informational support, social companionship, and instrumental support.

The Integrative Framework for Chapter 7

As shown in Figure 7.4, you learned that positive emotions, mindfulness, psychological capital, and organizational climate are all inputs that fuel Positive OB. These inputs are associated with outcomes across the three levels of OB. At the individual level, related

outcomes include task performance, work attitudes, well-being/flourishing, citizenship behavior/counterproductive behavior, turnover, career outcomes, and creativity. At the group/team level, outcomes include group/team performance and group cohesion and conflict. Finally, at the organizational level, outcomes include financial performance, overall organizational performance, customer satisfaction, and reputation.

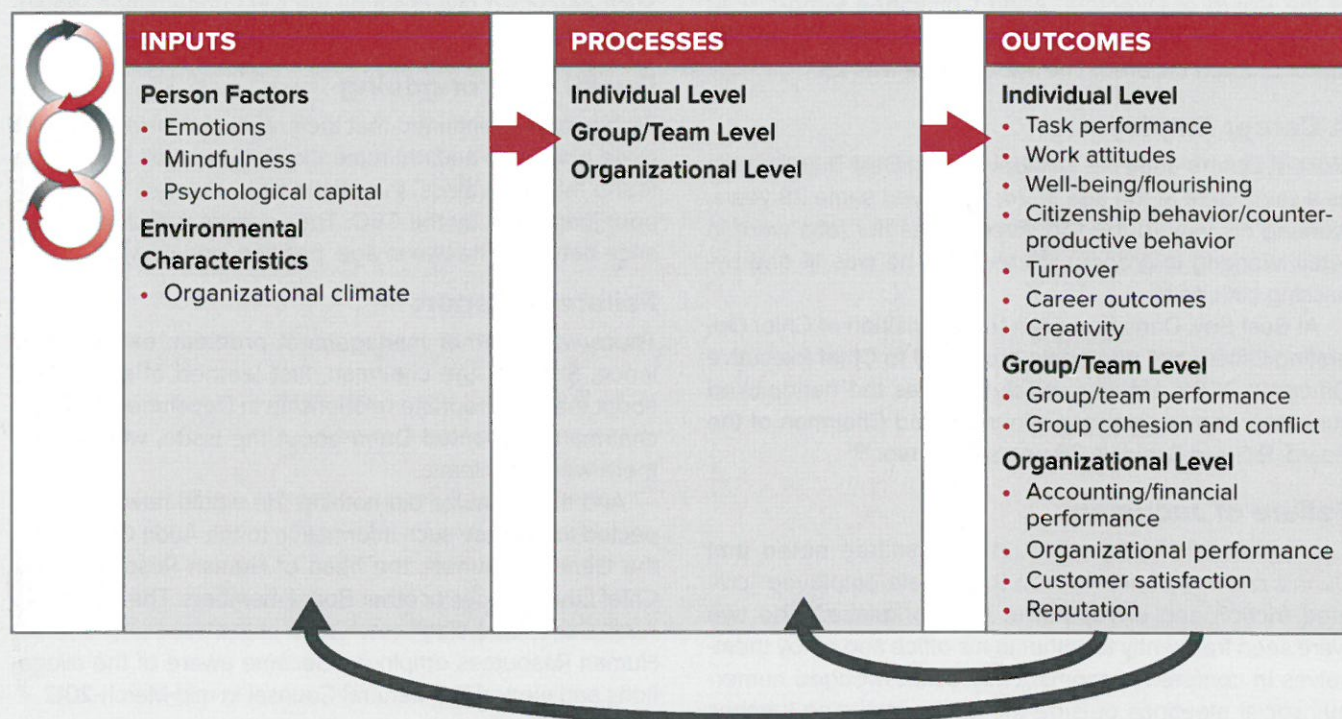
Challenge: Major Questions for Chapter 7

At the start of the chapter, we told you that after reading the chapter you should be able to answer the following major questions. Unless you can, have you really processed and internalized the lessons in the chapter?

Refer to the Key Points, Figure 7.4, the chapter itself, and your notes to revisit and answer the following major questions:

1. How does understanding Positive OB benefit me?
2. What is the role of positive emotions in POB, and how can they make me more effective at school, at work, and in other arenas of life?
3. How can mindfulness contribute to my effectiveness?
4. How can my inner HERO benefit me at work and in my career?
5. How can managers create an organizational climate that fosters Positive OB?
6. What can I do to enhance my level of flourishing?

FIGURE 7.4 INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING OB



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Best Buy: Trouble at the Top

You could say that Best Buy had enough problems. Competition is stiff in consumer electronics, even without online merchants, and margins are thin. At its height in April 2006, Best Buy was selling for over \$56 a share. But its stock shifted wildly with the changing market, dipping under \$18 in 2008, rising to over \$47 in 2010, and settling for \$30 and change by the end of March 2012.

Then improprieties came to light that led to the resignation of its CEO and the demotion of its founder. At issue was “an allegedly inappropriate relationship” between then CEO Brian Dunn and a female subordinate, in the language of the Board of Directors’ Audit Committee Report.¹⁰² At the time of the 2012 report, Dunn was married, 51, and the father of three children. The subordinate was 29.

A Career Employee

Most of Dunn’s adult life was devoted to Best Buy. Starting as a sales clerk at the age of 24, he stayed some 28 years, working his way to the top. Even his earlier jobs were in retail, working in grocery stores since he was 14 and bypassing college.¹⁰³

At Best Buy, Dunn had risen to the position of Chief Operating Officer and was again promoted to Chief Executive Officer in 2009. He was widely seen as the handpicked successor to the company’s founder and Chairman of the Board, Richard Schulze, 20 years his senior.¹⁰⁴

Failure of Judgment

The report of the Board’s Audit Committee noted that Dunn’s close relationship with the female employee “created friction and disruption in the workplace.” The two were seen frequently together in his office and off by themselves in conference rooms. They acknowledged numerous social meetings outside the office, including lunches and drinks, sometimes during the week and sometimes on the weekend. The female employee spoke openly about the favors she received from the CEO, which included tickets to concerts and sporting events.

The committee noted that in two trips abroad, totaling nine days in 2011, Dunn contacted the female employee by cell phone at least 224 times, including 33 phone calls, 149 text messages, and 42 picture or video messages, “for which there was no identifiable business purpose.” The CEO’s cell phone contained photos with messages expressing affection, one of which included the female employee’s initials.

Work Environment

The Audit Committee report concludes that Dunn acted unprofessionally and damaged the work environment, demonstrating “a lack of the judgment expected of the most senior executive officer of the Company.”

In 45 interviews, the Audit Committee spoke with 34 current or former employees. The report states that the relationship, as it became better known, “damaged employee morale and created unnecessary distraction in the workplace.” Some employees complained that “they felt that the rules appeared to apply to every employee except the CEO.” Some of the employees questioned senior management’s commitment to Best Buy’s stated policies and ethical guidelines.

Matters were not helped by the female employee’s frequent mentions of the attention and perks she was receiving. Such perceived favoritism by the CEO undermined the supervisor’s ability to manage the employee, the report noted.

Denial of Wrongdoing

Both parties maintained that their relationship was simply a close friendship and not romantic. But the Audit Committee found that regardless, the relationship showed “extremely poor judgment” by the CEO. The auditors noted the imbalance between the two in age, position, and power.

Failure to Report

There was another management problem: extended silence. Schulze, the chairman, first learned of allegations about the inappropriate relationship in December 2011. The chairman confronted Dunn about the issue, who denied there were problems.

And then Schulze did nothing. He would have been expected to disclose such information to the Audit Committee, the General Counsel, the head of Human Resources, the Chief Ethics Officer, or other Board members. The Board and Audit Committee didn’t catch wind of the issue until a senior Human Resources employee became aware of the allegations and alerted the General Counsel in mid-March 2012.

Conclusions

The Audit Report found that as CEO, Dunn had violated company policy as to inappropriate conduct, conflicts of interest, and vendor gifts (he had solicited a free concert ticket for the employee). It concluded that Chairman Schulze failed to appropriately report the allegations, a lapse that risked employee retaliation or other liability.

Departure

In the month before the report came out in May 2012, Dunn walked. He and the Audit Committee agreed on a separation package of \$6.6 million, comprising bonuses and stock grants already awarded, compensation for unused vacation, and severance pay.¹⁰⁵

Schulze complied with the request to step down as acting chairman, although he remains on the board in the created role of Chairman Emeritus.

Employee Uncertainty

The local public radio news uncovered an objective measure of how the fallout from the scandal and the board's reaction unsettled staff employees. During the three months of the spring of 2011, nearly 1,800 Best Buy employees joined LinkedIn, the employment-oriented social networking website, Minnesota Public Radio reported. "That's more new LinkedIn members just from Best Buy than from Cargill, 3M, General Mills, Medtronic and St. Jude Medical combined," all major employers in the state.¹⁰⁶ This surge implies a large number of employees losing confidence in the long-term status of their jobs and feeling the need to extend their professional networking.

Aftermath

Many business analysts responded favorably to the shakeup, expressing hope that the change would allow management to take a fresh look at the company's growing challenges (including competition from online retailers).¹⁰⁷ But the market punished the stock further, taking it to a low in the \$11 range by the end of 2012. In 2013, a year after the Audit Report, the stock had climbed back to the \$25 range and higher, with analysts split as to whether Best Buy was at best a buy, sell, or hold.

Apply the 3-Stop Problem-Solving Approach to OB

Referring to Figure 7.4 and your notes, apply the knowledge of OB presented in this chapter to the above case.

Applying this knowledge should enable you to recommend realistic and effective solutions.

Stop 1: What is the problem?

- Identify the outcomes that are important in this case.
- Which of these outcomes are not being achieved in the case?
- Based on considering the above two questions, what is the most important problem in this case?

Stop 2: Use the material in this chapter to help you understand the problem in this case.

- What person factors are most relevant?
- What environmental characteristics are most important to consider?
- Do you need to consider any processes? Which ones?
- What concepts or tools discussed in this chapter are most relevant for solving the key problem in this case?

Stop 3: What are your recommendations for solving the problem?

- Review the material in the chapter that most pertains to your proposed solution and look for practical recommendations.
- Use any past OB knowledge or experience to generate recommendations.
- Outline your plan for solving the problem in this case.

LEGAL/ETHICAL CHALLENGE

Tracking Sensors Invade the Workplace: Devices on Workers and Furniture Offer Clues for Boosting Productivity¹⁰⁸

Does face time matter? What about in call centers? Bank of America (BoA) wanted to answer these questions. To do so, it asked about 90 workers to wear badges with sensors to measure their movements and conversations. They found that the most productive employees were members of close-knit teams and spoke frequently with their colleagues.

What did they do? For one, BoA scheduled group rather than individual breaks. This boosted productivity by at least 10 percent.

Many companies are now using similar technology to collect real-time data. Sensors are fastened to furniture or worn on lanyards to measure how often employees get up, where they congregate, and with whom they communicate. These data are then used to structure the environment and modify policies to facilitate work, interactions, and communication. Some see this as a new tool to foster collaboration and productivity.

Cubist Pharmaceuticals, like BoA, found positive correlations between employees' productivity and face-to-face

interactions. In particular, it found that social activity dropped off significantly during lunch time, as many employees retreated to their desks to check e-mails, rather than chatting with one another. The company then decided to make its once-dingy cafeteria more inviting, improving the lighting and offering better food, to encourage workers to lunch together, instead of at their desks. Kimberly Clark Corp. also used this technology to learn that its employees commonly met in groups of 3 or 4, but did so in conference rooms designed for much larger groups. It reconfigured its meeting spaces.

Putting badges on workers is just the beginning of a broader trend, researchers say. As companies rethink their offices, many are looking into "smart buildings," wired with technologies that show workers' location in real time and suggest meetings with colleagues nearby.

But there's a fine line between Big Data and Big Brother, at least in the eyes of some employees, who might shudder at the idea of the boss tracking their every

move. Sensor proponents, however, argue that smartphones and corporate ID badges already can transmit their owner's location. As a result, many such studies allow employees to opt out. They instead wear "mock" sensors so others don't know whether they are participants or not.

Legally, current sensing technologies don't seem to violate employment laws. "It's not illegal to track your own employees inside your own building," says Dr. Ben Waber, CEO of Sociometric Solutions, a company that provides sensors and measurement. But others argue that such monitoring is a slippery slope. Providers of such services are likely to be pressured to provide individual employee data; while not illegal, some are concerned that this would be too invasive.

What Are Your Views?

1. Assume you're the owner of a company and you choose to use this technology. Justify your decision and describe how you will explain it to your employees.
2. Consider you are the employee representative on the executive board of the same company in the first question. You learn that management plans to use this technology, but employees are against it. Make your case to the board. On what grounds do you object?
3. Despite your compelling argument in question 2, management decides to go ahead and use the technology. However, it is willing to negotiate the boundaries. Describe the boundaries you and other employees are comfortable with.

GROUP EXERCISE

Disputing Negative Beliefs

Objectives

1. To learn how to combat negative thinking and emotions.
2. To practice cognitive reframing.

Introduction

Negative thinking and negative emotions serve to undermine your performance, attitudes, and moods. The bad news is that the brain is wired to pay attention to negative information. This is why negative emotions and beliefs tend to roll out of our minds automatically. The overall goal of this exercise is to provide you with a way to combat the snowballing of negative thinking and emotions. This should in turn foster the creation of positive emotions. The technique is called "cognitive reframing," and Martin Seligman developed a five-step process you can use. He labeled it the "ABCDEs."

Instructions

1. Take out a piece of paper and write down a response to the following items.¹⁰⁹
 - A. *Identify something that is causing you distress or negative emotions.* It could be a problem you are currently facing or something that might happen in the future. (For example: My roommate is moving out and I can't afford the rent by myself.)
 - B. *List the negative beliefs you have about the event or problem.* (For example: I don't have any prospects for a new roommate and may have to move. I might have to move back home and quit school. I could ask my parents for money, but they really can't afford to pay my rent. I could move to a lower-priced single apartment in a bad area of town.)
 - C. *Identify the consequences of your beliefs.* (For example: I am going to move back home for spring semester and return to campus in the fall.)

- D. *Formulate a disputation of your beliefs.* It is important to remember that pessimistic thoughts are generally overreactions, so the first step is to correct inaccurate or distorted thoughts. (For example: I have not studied my finances closely and may be able to afford the apartment. Even if I can't afford the apartment right now, I could get a part-time job that would cover the additional expenses. I don't have to accept a bad roommate, but worst case scenario is that I have to carry the added expenses for one semester.)
- E. *Describe how energized and empowered you feel at the moment.* (For example: I'm motivated to find a new roommate and get a part-time job. I have taken care of myself throughout college and there is no reason I can't continue to resolve this short-term problem.)

2. Pair up with someone else in the class and share your responses for the ABCDEs.
3. Each of you should provide feedback about Steps D—disputing negative beliefs—and E—describe positive feelings. In doing this, feel free to offer additional ideas for Step D.

Questions for Class Discussion

1. What are your reactions to this exercise?
2. Did the exercise help you to reframe negative beliefs into positive ones? Provide examples.
3. How might you use this technique in a more immediate way. In other words, which of the ABCDEs would be most important to use when negative thinking starts to dominate your thinking? Explain.