

Drs. Sarah Pressman and Acacia Parks, award-winning leaders in the field of positive psychology and health, have curated a brilliant, evidence-based resource that gives teachers feasible, engaging, and educational ways to introduce students to the basic tenets of positive psychology. What sets this great book apart is the excellence, thoughtfulness, and diversity of the interventions. There is something for everyone here to help, heal, and lead students to flourishing and to the good life.

—**Elaine O’Brien, PhD, MAPP**, former Assistant Professor, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, PA; Kinesiologist, with specialization in human movement psychology; coauthor of *The Power of Play: Optimize Your Joy Potential*; author of *Splash Dance: What a Feeling! Aqua Fitness Meets Positive Psychology*

Honestly, I’m excited to get my copy; I found so many things I want to use next year! Each chapter is an ideal mix of experiential activities and the scholarship behind them.

—**Cynthia L. S. Pury, PhD**, Professor, Department of Psychology, Clemson University, Clemson, SC

If you’re teaching or giving workshops on well-being, you hope to inspire a room full of people to explore, discover, and learn. This book is the fuel to help you do just that.

—**Todd B. Kashdan, PhD**, Professor of Psychology, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA; author of *The Upside of Your Dark Side* and *The Art of Insubordination: How to Dissent and Defy Effectively*

Edited by two respected researchers in the field of positive psychology, this activity book provides easy onboarding for those new to the teaching of positive constructs while adding to the repertoire of those who are more seasoned in the field. As the number of classes in positive psychology grows, the need for creative and varied classroom activities grows as well. Pressman and Parks deliver exactly that with this comprehensive and updated resource.

—**Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, PhD**, Associate Vice President for DEI Academic Initiatives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

More Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology: A Guide for Instructors offers state-of-the-art activities based on the latest evidence-informed theories of the science of positive psychology. As a professor of positive psychology and cofounder of the first PhD and research-based master's degree programs in positive psychology, I give my absolute highest endorsement of this new volume to anyone teaching positive psychology in a university setting, as well as to those teaching and applying positive psychology in workplaces, schools, communities, therapy and coaching, and health and well-being care settings across the globe.

—**Stewart I. Donaldson, PhD**, Distinguished University Professor, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA

The field is increasingly crowded with positive psychology textbooks, but *More Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology* stands out from the rest by offering experiments, activities, and exercises that help learners understand how and why positive psychology can be so powerful in their lives. Now with this new work, Pressman and Parks give us even more to love. The activities will be helpful not just for professors but also for researchers and practitioners to take the science of positive psychology beyond the classroom. Indispensable in a world where positivity is so sorely needed.

—**Judith T. Moskowitz, PhD, MPH**, Professor of Medical Social Sciences, Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, Evanston, IL

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*Indicates an activity that requires more than one lecture to complete (e.g., with a pre–post assessment, work to do at home). Note that many other activities can also be done across multiple classes, with many authors offering adjustments depending on how much time you have available.

PREFACE

The first volume of *Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology* was created to provide instructors of positive psychology with a resource similar to those available for older areas of psychology, which have countless video libraries, case studies, and activity books. The positive reception of the first volume made it clear that this was a much-needed resource and that a second volume would be extremely welcome and highly useful to the growing number of instructors teaching well-being courses. Therefore, this second volume is intended to assist all of those professors who are looking for new content, activities, and pedagogical tools to keep their classes engaging and to help them stay up-to-date on new insights from the field. We also noted, at the start of the last book, that there was no other book that allowed positive psychology instructors to learn how to teach each topic, not from a generalist writing a single textbook but from an expert on that particular topic. We are pleased to say that while we have continued this tradition in this new volume, we have worked to broaden our contributor pool. In this book, we have included senior researchers as well as up-and-coming junior experts, leaders in the pedagogy and practice of positive psychology, and individuals from a range of countries around the world. We hope that by including a wide range of voices, we will represent the amazing diversity of the field.

The areas that you will encounter will be a range of new and old. Some of them were covered in the last volume, but via different types of activities; for example, as a topic exploration versus an in-class experiment, or a classic manipulation of a positive psychology theme versus a new and exciting application described in this book. We recognized that instructors might want more than one activity to illustrate a concept and/or may prefer a certain type

of activity over another. As such, in this book, you will find new and engaging activities that you may never have considered before. To help you discover these activities more readily, in this edition, we have organized topics conceptually. As you will note in Volume 1, subjects were categorized as experiments, concept explorations, illustrations, and self-reflections. In this volume of the book, we have instead grouped the chapters thematically to make it easier for instructors to find the activities that match the assigned readings for the day (e.g., positive cognitions, relationships, interventions). We hope this is a simpler way to find the appropriate enrichment activity that highlights the construct each lecture is focused on. While content varies somewhat widely across different positive psychology books, we believe that by combining the two volumes of these teaching activities books, it will be possible to have an appropriate activity for almost every lecture you would want to deliver.

Another change from the last volume to this volume is the emphasis on experimentation. After receiving feedback from the users of the first book, we learned that students generally were more energized by the experimentally oriented activities that allowed them to collect data or see the effects of a theory in real time. That said, students still enjoyed a meaningful discussion on the importance of the topic, the value of the activity, future directions, and so forth. With this in mind, the vast majority of activities in this book are experiments, interventions, or similar manipulations with data collection partnered with an enjoyable set of prompts and readings that can aid in helping students understand and extract the key points of the activity. We also include far more appendices in this version, with instructions that you can edit as needed and print out as activity sheets to give to students to use in class. For example, you might have students use these sheets to fill out essays, do self-evaluations of well-being, or collect data. All of these can be turned in to you to aid your evaluations of student learning and participation.

Finally, you will note a lot of new content not found in the first volume. For example, there is a new and unique focus on research methods in positive psychology in the first section of the book. As you no doubt have noticed, science and scientists have been under attack of late thanks to growing misinformation, fake news, and a general distrust that grew during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it has never been more important to partner the teaching of positive psychology with instructions on methodological rigor, critical thinking, and strong research approaches. Unfortunately, most positive psychology textbooks do not have a methods section, nor do they focus on these topics. Thus, we hope that you will help take up the charge of ensuring our positive psychologists of the future are well-versed in these areas by adopting some of these brilliant activities into a few of your course lectures.

Between the two editors, we have over 25 years of experience teaching positive psychology courses, lecturing to the public, leading workshops, doing empirical and theoretical research in the field, building happiness applications, and translating this work for public and academic consumption. This experience

helped us guide our superstar authors to create highly usable, informative, and helpful chapters that will truly transform your classroom. We know that this book will change how we teach positive psychology in the future for the better, and we hope the same is true for you.

ORGANIZATION

This book is organized into five sections according to the themes of the chapters. Each section starts with a brief introduction to the topics covered as well as some advice on how to approach those chapters. The first section includes the newest content to this book series and focuses on letting students try out a range of research methods and critical thinking activities, as well as one chapter that demonstrates ways to improve the quality of classroom discussions more broadly. In Section II, we consider numerous activities and interventions examining either improving well-being or understanding how to change your day/life/environment in a manner that improves well-being. Section III highlights a number of important positive cognitions such as hopeful expectations, meaning interpretations, passion assessments, and the important concept of flow. Next, Section IV looks at the critical themes of prosociality and positive social relationships. As was often said by the late, great positive psychologist Chris Peterson, “other people matter.” Thus, we spend some time in this section offering you opportunities to engage your students on the value of social relationships and prosocial behavior, touching on putting these in different cultural and organizational frameworks. Related to this last point, the final section of the book (Section V) focuses on framing positive psychology in different contexts. As you likely know, well-being outcomes vary widely depending on numerous factors such as culture, geographic location, a range of demographic variables (e.g., socioeconomic status, age, sex), the environment, and health. This final section dips its toes into the wide range of critical contexts that interact with well-being, but, of course, there are numerous others to consider, and we hope that you do in discussions of these types of issues with your students.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book will be especially helpful in reducing feelings of burnout and disengagement in your students. The activities in the following pages will allow your students to connect with others in the classroom and with you (the instructor), and they will enable your students to act as scientists making their own exciting new discoveries about how positive psychology works. You won’t have to rack your brain on how to engage students with a new topic when you can have a world expert do the work for you.

This book is packed with 30 chapters from skilled academics, each of whom crafted a new active learning experience that illustrates a seminal concept in

positive psychology and is accompanied by content that will help you teach. This includes a succinct summary and background reading for each concept that you can use to teach students about the topics; detailed step-by-step instructions for running the activity; examples of what to say; detailed themes to raise in the discussions; and many supplementary handouts, videos, and assignments to round out your teaching. The active learning components involve discussions, making presentations, participating in a project, working with others, or even collecting data as a way of discovering/learning something. All of these approaches are well represented in this book, and we anticipate that implementing active learning into your course will change your course (and student outcomes) for the better. Most of these activities can be done over the span of one lecture, but a few will ask you to give students a week to work on something or ask you to strategically run an activity partnered with something going on in the real world (e.g., doing an activity before a big midterm). Activities that require longer than one lecture (e.g., due to at-home activities, self-monitoring, before and after assessments) are noted with an asterisk in the Table of Contents. As a result, it is important to read over any activities you hope to use well before you use them. This extra planning is worth it, as you will be dazzled by the creative exercises in this book and the incredible opportunities for your students to learn something using their own data and experiences. Concepts will truly stick in their minds, resulting in wonderful classroom environments and better learning outcomes. Finally, most chapters include some kind of assignment. These are typically designed to foster engagement and discussion in the classroom or to reinforce self-discovery about how the activity worked. Should you want exam questions and content-oriented testing materials, this should be easy to craft by using the background information provided in each chapter as well as the recommended readings each author has provided.

If you are an instructor with a preexisting positive psychology class, you can use this book by consulting the Table of Contents or the brief activity summaries in each chapter to find subjects that align with your curriculum. The authors have helpfully included a list of lecture topics that their activities can be easily integrated into in the Activity Setting section of each chapter. You can then incorporate these activities into your class plans to provide active learning in the classroom, assign them for students to complete outside of class, or even replace lecture material with something more interactive and discussion-based. You can also find many additional activities in the first book in this series (Froh & Parks, 2013) that may be of use. Additionally, as you will see in Section I of this book, we also include many areas not covered in the typical positive psychology textbook that can enhance your course, such as exciting new research methods that students can try out in your classroom, positive health and stress management ideas not discussed in most positive psychology texts, new areas of interest from the field of affective science, and important critical thinking topics.

For instructors who are brand new to the field or experienced experts creating a new well-being-oriented course that you are teaching for the first time, you may want to take a different approach. Using this book will allow you to make a unique course that will feel like your own as opposed to depending on someone

else's syllabus and/or relying on a textbook order of topics to decide what and when to teach something. For you, we recommend reading over the introductions to each of the five sections of the book, and perhaps the synopsis of each individual activity, as a starting point. You could then design an entire course based on active learning activities first and then supplement these after the fact with readings and more standard lecture materials. You will find this easy to do, as each activity includes very specific instructions on how to introduce each topic, text on what to say to students (including some scripts), homework assignments, and more. An additional option you would have with this approach is making your course an open-materials course to save students the expense of buying a new textbook. As you will notice when reading these activities, authors provide required and optional readings (typically journal articles and freely available websites as well as online resources, e.g., videos) and only on occasion rely on books that would have to be purchased (although some of these are likely available in your school's library). Given the importance of spreading positive psychology to everyone—not only those with the means to buy textbooks—this can increase the accessibility of your course to a broader range of individuals.

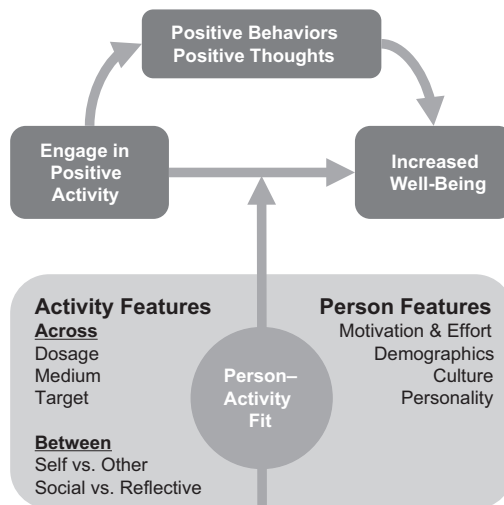
Some of you reading this may simply be interested in applying positive psychology in your own lives and/or incorporating it into your workplace, your practice, coaching activities, or perhaps other nonpositive psychology courses that have overlap with this field. Reviewers of this book indicated that many of the included activities could be used to help teach research methods, social psychology, emotion, health psychology, environmental psychology, cognition, clinical psychology, industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, introduction to psychology, and more. Given that there are many areas in psychology and connected fields without the depth of activities found here, we hope that this book will enrich many classrooms, clinics, workshops, and perhaps even just the day-to-day lives of some of our readers. For those of you in this category, we suggest, like the new instructors, that you peruse the Table of Contents for topics that jump out at you and that you read the first page or so of each chapter for those areas that catch your attention. Each chapter includes a brief upfront summary of the goals and tasks of the activity and can be readily skimmed to find sections that match your needs.

Finally, a few small pieces of advice as you guide individuals through these activities: First, because of expectancy effects, in some circumstances, you may want to avoid telling students what they are about to do and/or the intended outcomes, as these may alter the results or ruin the fun of the A-HA! moment that many activities produce. In these types of situations, we recommend that you simply tell students up front (at the start of the course or before the specific lecture) that you will be doing activities designed to help students do their best and have a successful academic experience and that they should enter these active learning experiences with open minds. You can also focus on the tasks at hand (e.g., today, we will be doing a writing exercise, a meditation, data collection) without describing the outcomes or big-picture topics that will arise

from the activity. Please note: Many chapter authors have specific instructions for when certain readings should be done (in order to facilitate the correct learning experience), so pay attention to those instructions.

As you complete the activities in this book, you may encounter a number of factors that can influence how well they work. For example, some students may not enjoy certain activities, some interventions may not be effective, and sometimes, the opposite of the expected outcome may occur. In these cases, it is important to explain to students that not all interventions work equally well for everyone. This is why it is often recommended in positive psychology research to give participants in interventions a choice of activities that they can complete (e.g., Seligman et al., 2006). Thus, this can be brought up in your lectures along with the broader impact of individual differences (e.g., age, culture, personality) and activity features (e.g., the length of the activity) on activity effectiveness, as shown in Figure 1. There are many research studies that support the idea that some activities will work better for some people. We encourage you to discuss this in the classroom and to refer to the examples of culture-oriented activities in Section V of the book. No doubt, every student in your course will have the opportunity to learn something new about this interesting field and hopefully increase their well-being along the way. Printable versions of the worksheets and handouts in the chapter appendices in this book and direct links to the resources in the Online Materials sections can be found on the APA website at <https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/more-activities-teaching-positive-psychology>.

FIGURE 1. The Positive Activity Model



Note. Adapted from “How Do Simple Positive Activities Increase Well-Being?,” by S. Lyubomirsky and K. Layous, 2013, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), p. 58 (<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412469809>). Copyright 2013 by SAGE Publications. Adapted with permission.

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