


UNC School of Social Work
Clinical Lecture Series




**Positive Emotions:
Science & Practice**

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Working Definition of Emotion



- Brief
- Multi-component mind-body system
- Initiated by a meaning assessment
- Distinct from other affective phenomena
- Triggers a self-sustaining spiral

Positive vs. Negative Emotions

- Seldom concern threats
- Fewer ties to pathology
- Less salient
- More diffuse
- More frequent
- More ties to oneness & self-transcendence
- Time Future vs. Time Present
- Upward vs. Downward Spirals
- Species-survival vs. Self-survival

Two Modes of Being




Self-Survival



Species Survival

4

Plasticity



Classic Phrases of Loving-Kindness Meditation

- *May [you] feel safe.*
- *May [you] feel happy.*
- *May [you] feel healthy.*
- *May [you] live with ease.*




Ode to the PEP Lab 



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The **Broaden-and-Build** Theory of Positive Emotions



www.PositiveEmotions.org
www.PositivtyResonance.com


Frederickson (1998). *Review of General Psychology*, 2, 300-319.
 Frederickson (2001). *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.
 Frederickson (2013). *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 1-53.

Positivity **Broadens** Awareness




Frederickson & Branigan (2005). *Cognition & Emotion*, 19, 313-332.

Positivity **Broadens** Awareness



Frederickson & Branigan (2005). *Cognition & Emotion*, 19, 313-332.

...and **Builds** Resources



Frederickson et al. (2008). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1045-1062.

Positive Emotions Unlock Other-Focused Thinking

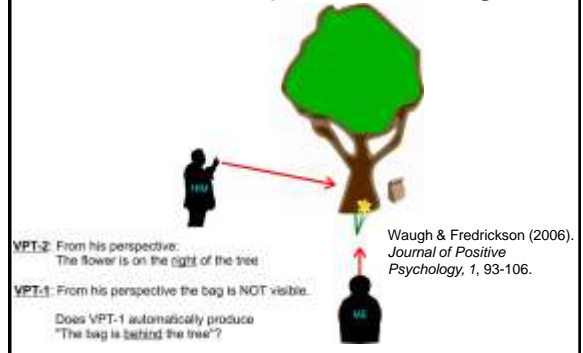


More Inclusion of Other in the Self



Waugh & Fredrickson (2006). *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1, 93-106.

Better Perspective Taking



More Oneness



Johnson & Fredrickson (2005). *Psychological Science*, 16, 875-881.

From Positivity to Positivity Resonance




What Love is *Not*...

- ✓ Sexual Desire
- ✓ A Special Bond
- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Exclusive
- ✓ Lasting
- ✓ Unconditional

What *is* Love?

- Two views from **relationship science**:
 - "Investment in the well-being of the other for his or her own sake" (IWB; Hegi & Bergner, 2010).
 - Perceived Responsiveness, or "gets me", i.e., feel understood, validated, and cared for (Reis, Clark & Holmes, 2004)
- What **emotion science** can add:
 - Biobehavioral components
 - A momentary lens
 - A broaden-and-build theoretical backdrop

Love is...



- an interpersonally situated experience marked by **momentary** increases in:
 - shared positive emotions;
 - biobehavioral synchrony;
 - mutual care;
- which, over time, **builds**:
 - embodied rapport (e.g., we really “clicked”);
 - social bonds;
 - commitment.

Fredrickson (2013). *Love 2.0*.

Love is...



Positivity Resonance

Love's 1st Precondition: Safety






Image from **Living Links Center**, Emory University; **Frans de Waal**, Director

Love's 2nd Precondition: Connection




Smiles Draw Attention



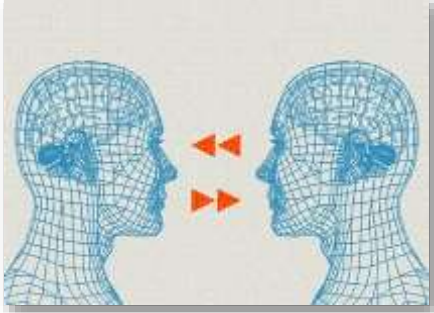
Becker et al. (2011). *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 140, 637-659.

Eye Contact Causes Mimicry



Schrammel et al. (2009). *Psychophysiology*, 46, 922-931.

Mimicry Creates Inter-Subjectivity



Niedenthal et al., (2010), *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 417-480.

Biobehavioral Synchrony: Acting as One



Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (*Perfect Lovers*) 1991.

Biobehavioral Synchrony: Acting as One




Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (*Perfect Lovers*) 1991.

Behavioral Synchrony



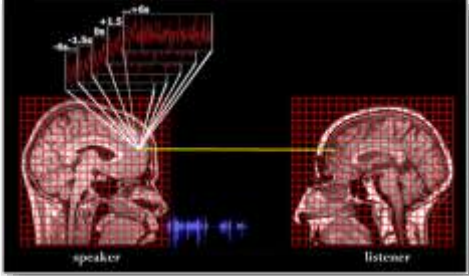
Vacharkulksemsuk & Fredrickson (2012). *JESP*, 48, 399-402.

Oxytocin Synchrony



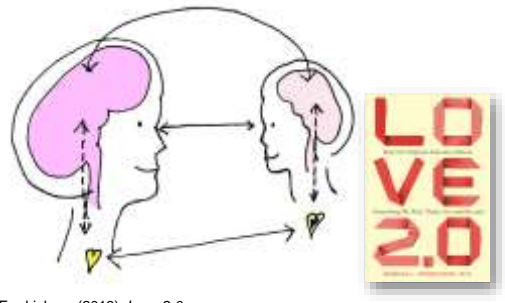
Feldman, Gordon, & Zagoory-Sharon (2010). *Hormones and Behavior*.

Neural Synchrony



Stephens, Silbert & Hasson, 2010, *PNAS*, 107, 14425-14430.

Love is Positivity Resonance



Fredrickson (2013). Love 2.0.

Love and Health



Changing Daily Diets



Lifestyle Change

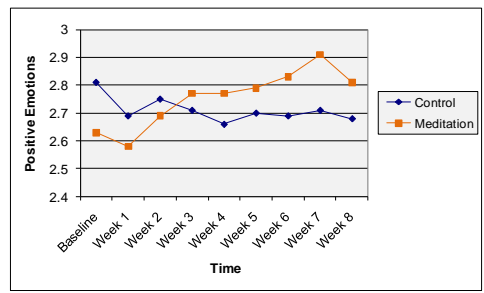


Seeding Positivity Resonance



Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM)

Increases Positivity...

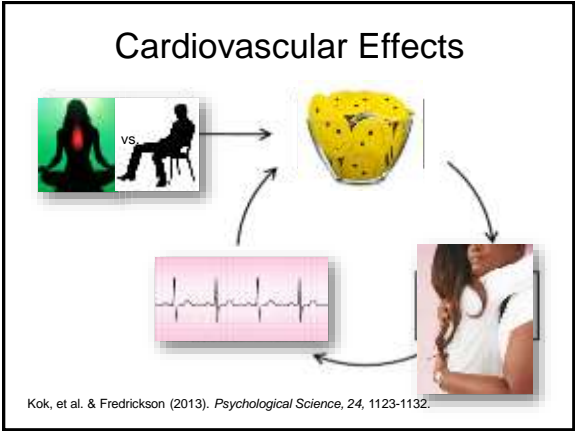
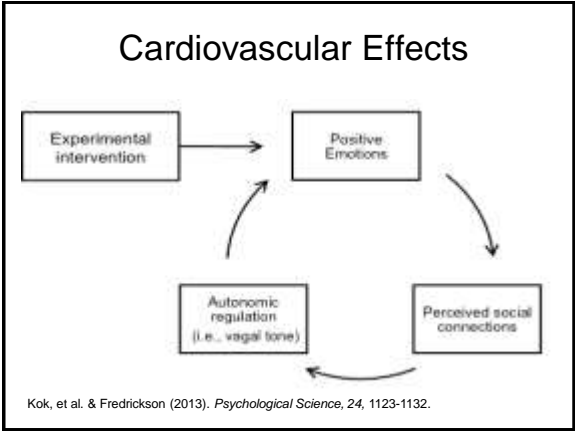
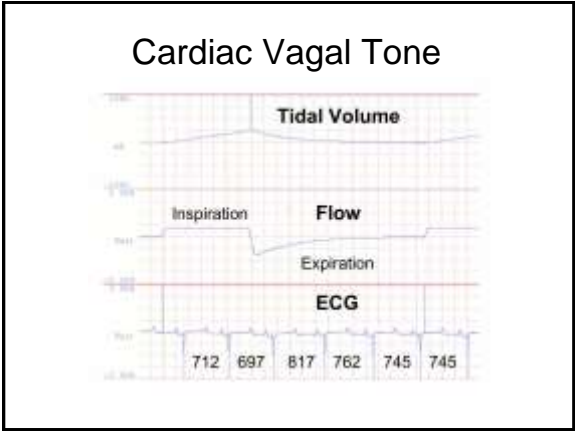


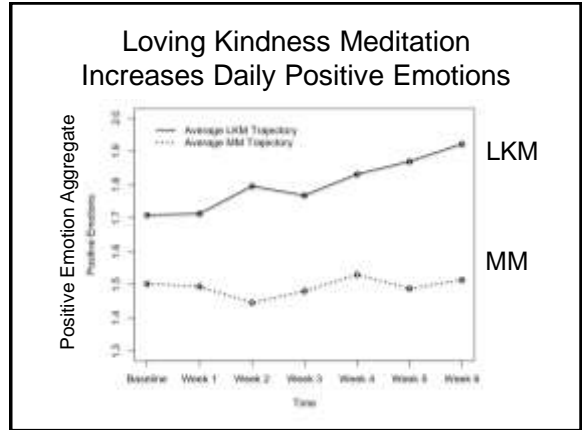
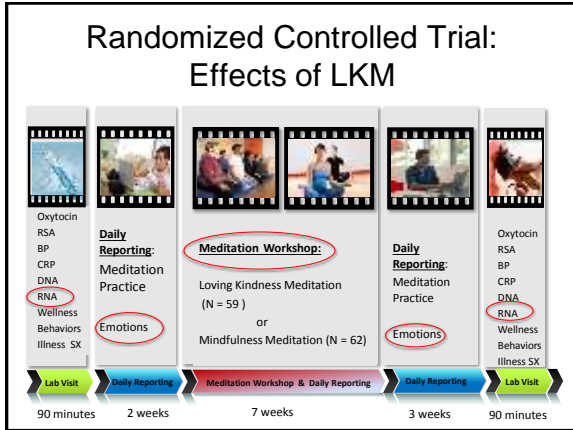
Fredrickson et al. (2008). Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95, 1045-1062.

...Builds Resources

Frederickson et al. (2008). *JPS*, 95, 1045-1062.

The Vagus Nerve





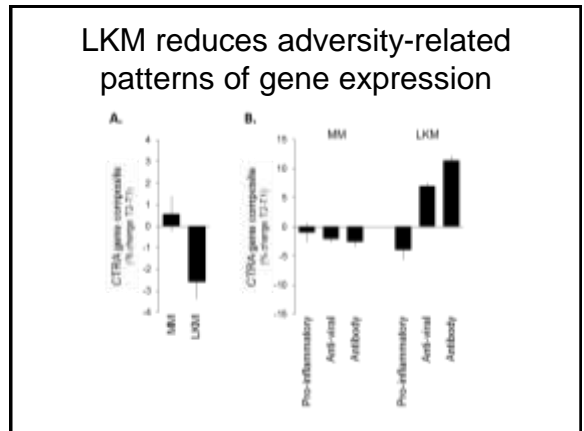
Functional Genomics Approach

Steve Cole, Director
UCLA Social Genomics
Core Laboratory

Our *a priori* "Region of Interest":
Conserved Transcriptional Response to Adversity (CTRA):
Evidence-based 53-gene composite that reflects:

- increased expression of proinflammatory genes
- decreased expression of antiviral genes
- decreased expression of antibody synthesis genes

Cole, S. W. (2009). *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, 132-137.
Fredrickson et al. & Cole (2013). *PNAS*, 110, 13684-13689.



LKM alters molecular physiology

Fredrickson, et al., & Cole (in preparation).

What's a Smile For?

- To express positivity (Ekman, 1975);
- To evoke positivity (Bachorowski & Owren, 2003);
- To evoke inter-subjectivity (Niedenthal et al., 2010);
- To broaden collective mindsets and build collective resources (Gervais & Sloan Wilson, 2005);
- **ALL OF THE ABOVE:** To create the life-giving nutrient of positivity resonance (Fredrickson, 2013).

Love is ...*micro-moments of positivity resonance*



a.k.a., "*day-to-day micro-utopias*"
-- Nicholas Bourriaud (1998)



"Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone; it has to be made, like bread; remade all the time, made new."

- Ursula K. Le Guin

What Meditation Is *Away of providing*

- ◆ Greater calm
- ◆ Improved concentration & increased awareness
- ◆ An enhanced connection to others
- ◆ More effective responses to difficulties and stress
- ◆ Renewed energy and balance

What Meditation Isn't

- ◆ It is not a religion
- ◆ It doesn't require special skills
- ◆ It doesn't demand a huge amount of your time every day
- ◆ It isn't an attempt to stop thinking
- ◆ It doesn't eliminate sadness or rough patches from your life

Core Principles in Meditation Practices *(from Christina Feldman)*

- ◆ Attention
- ◆ Awareness
- ◆ Understanding and Compassion

What is Loving-Kindness?

Loving-Kindness is a basic human response of friendliness and kindness. It exists as a seed or a potential that can be cultivated by anyone.

- Loving-kindness means great friendliness to self and others.
- It is a well of kindheartedness and wholesome deeds
- that are freely shared.



Loving-kindness is classically taught along with meditations that develop

- ❖ Compassion
- ❖ Sympathetic Joy
- ❖ Equanimity

Qualities That Support and Enrich Loving-Kindness Practice

- ❖ Generosity
- ❖ Forgiveness
- ❖ Gratitude

Directing phrases to the following five groups.

- ❖ Yourself
- ❖ A loved one, good friend, benefactor, teacher
- ❖ A person you feel neutral about
- ❖ A challenging person
- ❖ All people

Practicing
Loving-Kindness
Using Phrases

Loving-Kindness Phrases

- ❖ May I be happy
- ❖ May I be healthy
- ❖ May I be peaceful
- ❖ May I be safe

The Way We Practice with the Phrases Is:

- ❖ Attending to one phrase at a time
- ❖ Don't rush
- ❖ When your mind wanders, notice and come back to the phrases
- ❖ Keep repeating the phrases

Real Happiness The Power of Meditation

- *By Sharon Salzberg*
- www.sharonsalzberg.com



“The most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside of us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching - and living- becomes.”

-Parker Palmer

Loving-Kindness for Caregivers

- ❖ May I offer my care and presence unconditionally, knowing it may be met by gratitude, indifference, anger or anguish.
- ❖ May I find the inner resources to truly be able to give.
- ❖ May I offer love, knowing I cannot control the course of life, suffering or death.

- ❖ May I remain in peace and let go of expectations.
- ❖ I care about your pain and I cannot control it.
- ❖ I wish you happiness and peace and I cannot make your choices for you.
- ❖ May this experience help me open to the true nature of life.

**Ways of Developing
Kindness Toward
Yourself**

- ❖ Spend time reflecting on the good you have done
- ❖ Think of someone who has helped you, been kind to you
- ❖ Spend some time each day in self-care
- ❖ Repeat one phrase in times of difficulty

- ❖ Practice one act of generosity a day
- ❖ Keep a gratitude journal
- ❖ Go out in nature

**Factors that get in the way
of practice**

- ❖ Don't think you have time
- ❖ Can't remember to meditate
- ❖ Don't believe that it can make a difference
- ❖ Don't think you are doing it right

**You do not have to
separate your meditation
from your life.**

Formal and Informal
Practice

**Practical Suggestions
to Support Formal
Meditation Practice**

- ❖ Choosing time of day
- ❖ Choosing your location
- ❖ Deciding how much time you practice

- ❖ Knowing your motivation
- ❖ Summoning determination
- ❖ Practicing gratitude
- ❖ Remembering to include yourself

How to Develop Informal Loving-Kindness Practice

- Keep it simple!




- Learn one phrase that is meaningful to you and repeat it often for yourself

- ❖ Direct kindness toward yourself or others throughout the day.
- ❖ Send kind thoughts to yourself if you are upset, worried, feeling low, can't sleep.
- ❖ You can direct thoughts of compassion to your clients.

Practical things to support your effort

- ❖ Practice meditation diligently
- ❖ Spend time with like-minded friends, exchange ideas
- ❖ Read inspiring books
- ❖ Join a practice group or class

Ten thousand flowers in
spring,
The moon in autumn,
A cool breeze in summer,
Snow in winter—
If your mind is not clouded
By unnecessary things,
This is the best season
of your life.



-*Wu Men*

Thank you

