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ENG 112

Formal Assignment #2 – Research Project

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Gratitude Over All

Introduction: My Entry into Three Good Things:

“18-to-24 year olds express gratitude less often than any other age group, and are more likely to express gratitude for self-serving reasons” (Simon-Thomas). This really says something about our generation. People take gratitude with a grain of salt, always focusing on their own personal problems or worries. “60 percent thought that people are less likely to express gratitude today than 100 years ago” (Simon-Thomas). This is something to really think about. Gratitude is something that should be expressed without even thinking. It is something that should happen when you wake up in the morning, throughout your days, and before you go to bed. It seems like it’s a burden, but in reality it is not. It’s all about understanding what it can do to one’s wellbeing and daily thought process. Martin Seligmen, the founder of positive psychology, created the “3 good things” process to determine if sitting down each night to write down 3 good things that happened to you throughout the day can have a positive impact on your wellbeing. The answer to this question? Yes. Not just yes, as in attempting this process with no real effort. But if you truly believe and take the time to do Seligmen’s process, you sure will better your wellbeing. The 3 good things gratitude process does have an impact on your well-being through healthy relationships and social connections.

Literature Review

Positive psychology should be a topic every person thrives to learn more about. Defined by the *Positive Psychology Center*, “positive psychology is the scientific study of strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.”

Well-being goes hand in hand with positive psychology. Seligman measured well-being by the PERMA model; “positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and purpose, and accomplishment” (Authentic Happiness). More specifically, according to *Well-being Concepts*, “Well-being is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well.” There are many aspects that play a part in a person’s well-being. You have to be willing to be better to feel better.

Gratitude is very important in positive psychology. Some say it is a difficult term to define, because of how broad of a term it is, however Randy A. Sansone describes it as, “the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself; it is a general state of thankfulness or appreciation.” The three good things process has proven to me that gratitude goes a long way. I always associated the term with just being thankful for others good deeds. However there is so much more to it than that. Amy Morin, of *Psychology Today,* notes “Gratitude opens the door to new relationships.” This stuck out to me because it related to my research on the three good things process. “Whether you thank a stranger for holding the door or send a thank-you note to that colleague who helped you with a project, acknowledging other people’s contributions can lead to new opportunities” (Morin). A lot of people in this generation fail to express their gratitude, especially over the little things like holding the door or thanking your boss for your job. The types of things that we have grown to just expect out of people, without feeling the need to share our gratitude. On the other hand, there is an ongoing question of, does gratitude really improve your well-being? According to Summer Allen of *Greater Good Magazine*, “while these studies suggest that grateful people are healthier, they could also suggest that people in poorer health are less likely to feel grateful.” This could cause confusion and uneasiness towards people who may have unfortunate illnesses out of their control. They could believe that they have nothing to be grateful for, or that they will never be able to improve their well-being without great health. Some people just may not believe in having gratitude, so their well-being would not be affected. This relates to my own personal experience of the 3 good things process in a sense. Before beginning the process I did not believe writing down 3 good things about my day would make any change in my well-being. I was wrong. I noticed myself feeling more appreciative of little things throughout the day knowing I was searching for things to write down. One of the main things in my life that had a big impact on this process is relationships with my friends and family. I have a very strong relationship with the people in my life and their happiness makes me happy. “Gratitude opens the door to more relationships” (Morin). Relationships and social connections are important, whether its friends or family or loved ones. I get a feeling of fullness when I’m around people that I love and I realized this to the fullest during this process.

Findings

 Through the 3 good things process, I was able to understand more than I thought was possible about gratitude. It gave me the opportunity to realize how many more good things there are in my days than bad. The most important thing that I learned through my research was that my social connections with people is where I thrive. I genuinely enjoy the presence of people that I truly love and care about. This has always been something that I was aware of, however actually taking note of it and writing it down was what really opened my eyes. My few friends that I have kept over the years that have grown with me as a person, also mean the world to me. On the first day of the process I had taken one of my good friends, Natalie, out to get our nails done for her birthday. I treated, and also paid for us to get massages during the manicures. When I sat down at the end of the day I took the time to appreciate having her as a friend. I felt very grateful and appreciated that I did something nice for someone who doesn’t often have nice things done for them. I have a handful of people in my life that bring me so much joy and I am incredibly grateful for that. The second day was filled with family oriented events. The relationships I have with my family, mean more to me than the world. I was able to book a flight to Florida, where my entire family will be spending Christmas this year. It brought me such joy to sit down and think about the fact that I was able to accommodate my schedule to make this vacation happen. Especially because this is something my family has never done before so I knew this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I then spent the rest of the evening hanging out with my dad and my grandmother, which is also something I don’t get to do too often. Another day where I noticed myself really enjoying my families presence was the Sunday before the end of the week. My aunt and I live together, however our schedules are very opposite so sometimes we go days without seeing each other. That Sunday we had the chance to sit down and have coffee together and catch up. When I sat down that night I noticed myself appreciating that moment more than I would’ve any other day. I felt writing this stuff down made me appreciate these moments even more. It is incredible to realize the things you should have gratitude towards. Acknowledging it through a pen and paper truly allows you to decode what it truly means to you. I felt as if I was a better person after this process because I see myself thinking about it even now, weeks after it was completed. It brought me joy going back and reading my journal entries because I was able to take a look from the outside and understand that gratitude really does go a long way.

Conclusion

 I have come to realize that the three good things process will never leave my thoughts. It made such an impact on my well-being internally that I believe I will continue to use it especially throughout my college career when things tend to get overwhelming and stressful. I am going to try to keep this process with me and use it to my full advantage. My main take away from this process is that every person will always have something to be grateful for each day. Being able to fall asleep at night and waking up in the morning is a true blessing. There are people in this world who fall asleep at night not knowing they maybe wont wake up the next day. We all need to encourage these thoughts in each other and understand that gratitude is one of the most important things to have in life. Your well-being is also one of the most important things to have in life. I will share this process with whomever I cross paths with in need of light.

Works Cited

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