

## EDITORIAL

# *Editorial: Launch of the European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*

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and Stephen Palmer PhD<sup>3</sup>*

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As researchers, practitioners and psychologists, when we think about positive psychology, key themes are likely to spring to mind such as happiness, hope, gratitude, optimism, wellbeing (subjective, individual and community), resilience, creativity, character strength and virtue, flourishing and positive human functioning. In short, positive psychology can be understood as the “... the scientific study of optimal human functioning” (Linley, Joseph, Harrington & Wood, 2006, p.8). Gable and Haidt (2005, p.104) tell us that it “... is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions”. Today, a Google Scholar search with the key words ‘positive psychology’ showed an encouraging 98,200 results.<sup>1</sup>

Positive psychology became more formally recognised within mainstream psychology around the turn of the century following Seligman’s 1998 Presidents Address to the American Psychological Association which called for a “A new science of human strengths” (1999,

p.560). This application of psychology is underpinned by a viewpoint that “The exclusive focus on pathology that has dominated so much of our discipline results in a model of the human being lacking the positive features that make life worth living” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). However, the essence of this approach has been in existence for some time previous to this, for example within the antecedents of humanistic psychology.

Whilst potentially introduced as a term first by Abraham Maslow (1954), we can see threads of positive psychology elsewhere within philosophy, utilitarianism (Hefferon & Boniwell, 2011) and the seminal work of William James in 1902 (as cited in Linley et al, 2006). There are even insights from evolutionary psychology (Buss, 2000). It is fair to say that building upon earlier work there is now a growing modern body of evidence and discussion informing our understanding of the application, theory and methodology of positive psychology (e.g. Fredrickson, 2001; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Linley

et al, 2006; Bandura, 2008; Diener, 2012; Palmer, 2015; Rich 2016). Various authors have offered reflections aiming to address critiques of the field (e.g. Gable & Haidt, 2005; Linley et al 2006; Diener, 2009;) and the current case for positive psychology has been presented (e.g. Lopez & Gallagher, 2012).

Yet, despite the rapid development and propagation of research within positive psychology, the applied aspects of this discipline took a number of years to emerge. Even though positive psychology had offered a number of theories and empirical studies considered useful by coaching, educational, health and organisational professionals, relatively few practical positive psychology tools and models were being integrated into practice during the first decade of the discipline. This is probably because apart from a limited number of validated interventions, few attempts have been made to “practicalise” and adapt positive psychology concepts to professional contexts until relatively recently.

Today we see positive psychology applied across a range of different settings including education, forensic, health, work, coaching, counselling and clinical contexts. The establishment of a positive psychology movement within the profession of psychology can be evidenced by initiatives including the publication of peer-reviewed Journals, International Summits and Congress events such as the International Society for Coaching Psychology conference in July 2016 in London (UK) examining Positive and Coaching Psychology Through the Life Course. The International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) will also host the Fifth World Congress of Positive Psychology in July, 2017 (see: <http://www.ippanetwork.org/wcpp2017>). Globally, there is also a range of University based and affiliated academic undergraduate modules and postgraduate programmes in positive psychology as well as commercial training courses available for professional and/or continuing development.

Thus, it does now seem timely to launch a new peer reviewed journal to further advance upon this important field. The European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology (EJAPP) will publish papers and articles covering the theory, research and practice of positive psychology. As such, we welcome contributions focusing on aspects of applied positive such as:

- Flourishing
- Flow
- Strengths

- PERMA
- Positive Emotions
- Positive Engagement
- Positive Relationships
- Positive Purpose
- Positive Accomplishment
- Positive Education
- Positive management
- Positive health & wellbeing
- Positive Organisational Scholarship
- Positive Organisational Psychology
- Positive Leadership
- Positive Transitions
- Positive Psychology Coaching
- Coaching as applied positive psychology research
- Positive Psychology Training

The EJAPP also encourages submissions in the form of discussion papers, brief reports, short papers on techniques, book reviews and conference reports. As an online journal, once articles are accepted for publication, they will be uploaded within 21 days.

We are delighted the International Society for Coaching Psychology (<http://www.isfcp.net>) is supporting the development of positive psychology as a Professional Body Sponsor of the journal, joined by the Centre for Coaching (<http://www.centreforcoaching.com>) and International Academy for Professional Development as Corporate Sponsors (<http://www.iafpd.com>).

Further guidance for authors and information about the journal is available on the website:

<http://www.nationalwellbeingsservice.org> ■

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**Dr Ilona Boniwell** is one of the European leaders in positive psychology, having founded and headed the first Masters Degree in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) in Europe at the University of East London. Nowadays, she heads the International MSc in Applied Positive Psychology (I-MAPP) at Anglia Ruskin University (that includes a dedicated positive

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