

Three Good Things (Three Blessings) Exercise

NAME:

The Three Good Things (also known as "The Three Blessings")

PURPOSE/EFFECTS:

The Three Good Things exercise is intended to increase happiness and a sense of wellbeing.

It does this by a simple method of redirecting attention towards positive thoughts and away from negative thoughts. Human beings have evolved to spend much more time thinking about negative experiences than positive ones. We spend a lot of time thinking about what has gone wrong, what stinks about life or how we aren't stacking up. In the past there may have been an evolutionary advantage to this way of thinking, since it seems to be innate. However, for modern humans this negative bias is the source of a lot of anxiety, depression, and general lack of wellbeing.

Luckily, by re-directing our thoughts on purpose towards positive events, we can do a lot to correct this negative bias.

In the video, Martin Seligman describes the purpose and effects of this exercise. Here he uses the alternate name, the "Three Blessings."

Martin Seligman Describes the Purpose of the "Three Blessings" exercise

<http://sites.google.com/site/psychospiritualtools/Home/psychological-practices/three-good-things>

METHOD:

Summary

Each night before you go to sleep:

1. Think of three good things that happened today.
2. Write them down.
3. Reflect on why they happened.

Long Version

This exercise is to be done each night before going to sleep.

Step 1: Think about anything good that happened to you today. It can be anything at all that seems positive to you. It need not be anything big or important. For example,

you might recall the fact that you enjoyed the oatmeal you had for breakfast. On the other hand, you might also recall that you got a good grade on a test, or you had uninterrupted sleep. Anything from the most simple to the most exalted works, as long as it seems to you like a good, positive, happy thing.

Step 2: Write down these three positive things.

Step 3: Reflect on why each good thing happened. Determining the "why" of the event is the most important part of the exercise. For example, you might say that your oatmeal tasted really good this morning because your partner took the time to go shopping at the local farmer's market, where they have fresh, organic oatmeal. Or you might say that your child took its first step today because God was pouring blessings down upon your family, or because it really wanted to get to some cookies on the table. You get to decide reasons for each event that make sense to you.

HISTORY:

This method was created by psychologist Martin Seligman. He is considered to be an expert on depression and happiness, has been called the "father of Positive Psychology," and is one of the preeminent psychologists of the 20th century. He is also the director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Three Good Things Exercise has been scientifically demonstrated to be effective.