

Applied Positive Psychology
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Week 2

Lecture 6: Interventions for promoting positive emotions & happiness 1: Gratitude & Savoring Interventions

I welcome you all to module two of the course. So, module two is basically titled "Positive Emotions and Happiness." This is lecture number six. In this particular lecture, we'll talk about interventions to promote positive emotions and happiness. In the last few lectures, we have discussed some basic concepts related to positive emotions and happiness. In this lecture and one more upcoming lecture will focus on some specific interventions.

So, today's lecture is titled "Interventions for Promoting Positive Emotions and Happiness", and this is the first part of the lecture. Today, we will talk about two major intervention strategies: one is gratitude, and the other is called savoring. So, before discussing today's lecture, let me briefly recap the last lecture. In the previous lecture, which was lecture number five, we discussed some parts of the same module. There, we discussed some of the concepts listed here. We discussed the psychology of happiness and subjective well-being. We talked about how, in psychology, we measure the idea of happiness and use it in the context of research.

We also addressed the question: Can we become happier? Is it possible to increase the level of happiness? In that context, we discussed the significant sources of pessimism and optimism from the literature. We discussed the pursuit of joy, the obstacles we face, and how we can go beyond those obstacles to increase our joy. In that context, we discussed a sustainable happiness model, where we discussed different factors that determine happiness and how to go beyond various barriers that we all have. In the end, we discussed positive activity interventions that can increase happiness.

So, that kind of foundational lecture stated basic concepts and a theoretical framework for understanding happiness intervention models. Today, we will focus more on specific interventions. So, in today's lecture, we will focus on gratitude and how it relates to well-being and happiness. We'll discuss why gratitude promotes well-being, and we'll also talk about some gratitude exercises. There are other concepts related to positive emotion enhancement called

savoring, and we'll see how it benefits and what factors influence savoring. Finally, we'll discuss research-based tools for enhancing savoring, so let's start today's lecture.

We'll start with gratitude, which we discuss as an intervention strategy for improving happiness. Gratitude is an important concept that can help us enhance our well-being and happiness. So let us try to understand the concept of gratitude first, and then we'll talk about its applications. So these are some of the statements that reflect what gratitude is all about and what its importance is. For example, one statement says whatever you are searching for—peace of mind, prosperity, health, or love—is waiting for you if you are only willing to receive it with an open and grateful heart. So, all these positive qualities of the mind, like peace of mind, prosperity, health, and positive emotions, all these can be achieved with the help of an open and grateful heart, meaning that an attitude of gratitude can increase all these aspects in our lives. Another statement that shows gratitude is the key that opens all doors, unlocks life's fullness, and is the key to abundance, prosperity, and fulfillment. So, similar concepts again show the importance of gratitude in enhancing positive emotions and well-being in our lives.

Now, the question is, what is gratitude all about? Before discussing it as an intervention strategy, gratitude is derived from the Latin word "gratia," which means grace or gratefulness. So, in literal terms, generally, when we talk about gratitude, we are basically talking about the attitude of gratefulness, that you are grateful for something in your life. Gratitude has been conceptualized in many ways, depending on the context. It has been conceptualized as a moral virtue, an attitude, an emotion, a habit, a personality trait, and a coping response. So, in literature, gratitude has been conceptualized in various ways: it has been seen as a trait, it has been seen as an attitude, it has been seen as a moral virtue, and it has been seen as an emotion. All these diverse conceptualizations are there, but the foundational idea remains the same. So, gratitude is an acknowledgment; one of the ways we can talk about it is that it is an acknowledgment that we have received something valuable from others or from life itself.

So when you acknowledge that something is good in your life, you have received something valuable from other individuals or life itself, and that is where gratitude starts. It arises from a posture of openness to others, where we can gladly recognize their benevolence. It is that mental attitude or openness to others in life, where we can acknowledge that others have contributed to us or that life has contributed to our lives. From that openness, you realize that something is valuable in your life, and you are thankful for that.

So, a broader and context-free definition of gratitude is the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself, representing a general state of thankfulness and appreciation. There are two aspects to it; one is that you recognize and appreciate that there is something valuable and meaningful, and then you become thankful for it. So, recognition and appreciation lead to becoming grateful for it. These are the two essential aspects of the concept of gratitude.

So, people may experience gratitude in many situations, depending on what happens in those situations. For example, we may experience gratitude when we notice how fortunate our life circumstances are. When you realize that you are lucky enough to get something in life, because that situation could have been worse, you cannot take life for granted because you have received something valuable; there is a possibility that these things could be missing. Despite that, you have received something, so notice how fortunate one's life circumstances are—because it could have been much worse—there may be many other people who don't even have that, so by noticing that, one may feel grateful. Gratefulness, or gratitude, also comes from thanking someone who has contributed to one's life.

When you see that someone has contributed positively to your life, it could be your friends, family members, or whoever it is. When you show that thankfulness, you experience gratitude. Gratitude can also be experienced by recalling the good things in one's life. You feel grateful when you remember the many good moments in life and the positive things that have happened. So, in many ways, we can experience gratitude depending on various things we recognize, especially the positive, meaningful, and valuable aspects of our lives.

Gratitude involves focusing on the present moment, even though things could be in the past or future, appreciating your life as it is today and what has made it so. So, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives by being grateful. These are different aspects of the concept of gratitude. Now, research has shown that the attitude of gratitude or the experience of gratitude is very strongly related to the well-being and happiness of people. The more you experience gratitude in one's life, the more it leads to happiness, an increase in happiness, or overall well-being.

Some of the research findings are listed here. Gratitude is one of the foundations of well-being and mental health throughout the lifespan in every stage of life. Gratitude has been shown to contribute to various well-being measures; for example, research has indicated that experiences

of gratitude increase positive effects and decrease adverse effects. Effect here basically means emotions in a general sense. So gratitude increases positive emotions and decreases negative feelings. It is negatively associated with depression, anxiety, loneliness, envy, and neuroticism. All these negative emotional constructs, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and envy, are negatively related to gratitude, meaning that with the increase of gratitude, all these things decrease. Gratitude has been positively associated with prosocial traits such as empathy, forgiveness, willingness to help others, and overall social well-being. Research also indicates that gratitude positively relates to prosocial traits, meaning the tendency to help others, such as empathy, forgiveness, a willingness to help others, etc. It is also very strongly related to social well-being and so on. Research also indicated that gratitude is linked to improved well-being, including fewer health complaints and a more positive outlook. So, your attitude and outlook towards life also become positive. These are some of the research findings that show the importance of gratitude and its contribution to increasing the quality of our lives regarding emotional and social aspects.

The next question we should address is, though the research shows so many positive benefits of gratitude, what promotes all these things? What is the mechanism behind it? Why does gratitude promote well-being and happiness? What is the reason for it? So let us address these questions. So, researchers like Emons and Mishra also provided some possible mechanisms. They summarized some of the possible reasons why gratitude could promote well-being.

One of the reasons is that gratitude facilitates coping with stress. So, whenever you experience gratitude or become grateful for something positive in your life, it promotes healthy and adaptive coping styles and strategies, such as seeking social support, taking help from others, and having a more positive outlook in life, you try to solve and engage with problems effectively, so active coping and engagement become much more prevalent when we experience gratitude. When you are in a positive frame of mind, you are more likely to cope effectively with life's problems because when we become too stressed and our mindset becomes too negative, we cannot see the solutions to problems. Every problem looks much greater than it actually is, but when you have an attitude of gratitude, it helps you look at the issues, think properly in the right direction, seek support from others, and so on. All these things can help us facilitate coping with stress. So, this is one way to promote well-being because you can cope better with life's problems. So that will naturally lead to better outcomes in terms of well-being, and so on.

Another reason is that gratitude reduces toxic emotions, often from self and social comparisons; these toxic emotions include anger, jealousy, and others. A lot of the time, those emotions come from upward social comparison. So, this is something we'll be discussing in the following lecture. So, when we compare ourselves to someone better than we are, in a contrastive fashion, your relationship with that person is not positive; instead, you are, in a more competitive sense, thinking that person is better than you. So that is called an upward social comparison. Primarily, such comparisons negatively impact well-being because you feel like someone is better than you and that you are not as good as that person, and so on. That leads to negative emotions, and it may lead to envy and jealousy and those kinds of things. Now, research shows that the attitude of gratitude actually decreases this kind of upward social comparison, which may lead to all these negative emotions. So, the less we engage in this social comparison, the more we will likely experience positive and less toxic emotions.

Gratitude is incompatible with toxic emotions such as envy and resentment. Both cannot exist at the same time. So when you experience gratitude, you cannot experience toxic emotions; therefore, both cannot exist together. So, in that sense, it will reduce those emotions and improve our well-being. The next mechanism that shows how gratitude can improve our well-being is that gratitude improves our self-esteem. So, gratitude has been consistently linked with higher and more stable self-esteem. However, the direction of this relationship is unclear, whether it is higher self-esteem that leads to greater gratitude or gratitude that leads to self-esteem, which can happen in both ways, probably.

So the directionality is not very clear, but it seems there is a positive correlation between gratitude and self-esteem. So, improving your self-esteem is a good indicator of mental health and higher well-being. Another mechanism is that gratitude enhances access to positive memories. So, the more grateful we become, the more we are in a state of positive emotions, and we are more likely to remember positive things in our lives because that is also one of the aspects of gratitude. So, you are more likely to remember positive memories from life. The more you remember positive memories from life, the more you are likely to experience positive emotions. So, in that sense, it enhances positive memories and feelings, which can boost well-being. Gratitude also builds social resources. This is very important because the more we experience gratitude in life, the more likely we are to have better relationships with other people in the social context. It strengthens existing relationships and promotes building new relationships with other people healthily. Simply because the people who are much more of a

complaining nature generally have a lot of conflicts and other things arise in their lives. So, if you are in a relationship, express more gratitude and become more thankful towards the other person's contribution to your life. The relationship dynamics become much healthier. The other person also realizes that you recognize their contribution, and that person also feels that there is a healthy dynamic between the two people. On the other hand, the more you become complaining in nature, the more conflicts and issues erupt in the relationship. So that is why, you know, gratitude also promotes building better social relationships and maintaining existing relationships. Some research also shows, for example, that gratitude is a strength of character highly desired in romantic relationships, which can also predict the quality of the relationship, especially in the romantic context. Social resources can play a vital role in the social context.

Gratitude also motivates moral prosocial behavior. You are more likely to do the right thing in your life, the more you experience gratitude, because it comes from that positive state of mind. So, it promotes both direct reciprocal altruism and upstream reciprocity.

Upstream reciprocity involves passing on a benefit to a person uninvolved in the initial exchange, thus promoting prosocial behavior. So, gratitude promotes direct altruism, which means it's helping behavior, and upstream reciprocity, which means you pass on the benefit. So, you benefit one person, and the other person is also likely to pass on that benefit to others who are even uninvolved in the initial exchange. So, it can stimulate a spiral of positive actions.

Now let's talk about the gratitude exercise. So how can we actually increase these experiences of gratitude in our lives? Since gratitude may not come automatically to most people, the human mind is more inclined to complain. We tend to see more negative things in life, what we have not got in life, and what others have received. So that is where our attention primarily goes. Naturally, our minds are oriented towards complaining. Increasing gratitude may require some practice and a change of attitude. So, it may not happen automatically. To increase gratitude, it is essential that we can do it in a more structured way, enhancing it by doing some exercise.

Some exercises that positive psychologists talk about show how we can do them. One way is to keep a gratitude journal. Keeping a gratitude journal can be one of the exercises that people can do to enhance this state of gratitude. So how do we do that? This exercise reminds us of what we are grateful for, such as gifts, grace, benefits, loved ones, etc. You intentionally and consciously direct your attention to what you can be grateful for. So, it's an intentional exercise. More specifically, this can be done by writing about it. Since gratitude is like the intentional activities we discussed in the last lecture, you need to put effort into it. So how do you do that?

Write about different things for which you can be grateful. Some of the instructions associated with that can be like this: Choose a time in the day when you have some free time and are free from distraction. It could be the first thing of the day in the morning, the last thing of the day at night, or sometimes in between, such as during commuting. So, when you have some free time, you can do this exercise where there are few distractions and you are not worried about anything. Now reflect on three to five things for which you are currently grateful. It could be as simple as the mundane, like your electric appliances getting fixed. You can also be grateful for simple things like this. Or to something magnificent, like you got some spiritual insight, some revelation, etc., whatever it is. So, the thing is, to experience gratitude, something great doesn't need to happen in your life all the time. One can be grateful for simple things, like fixing your electric appliances. It is about cultivating an attitude to see and become thankful for even small things in one's life, which we generally don't notice and pay attention to.

So you can list three to five things that you have experienced. You can experience great gratitude, including straightforward things in your daily life. One may also focus on some skills or abilities you can be grateful for, as they give you a lot in your life. You can also think about the opportunities life has given you, which have helped you reach certain stages in your life.

You can focus on various goals that you have achieved. You may also reflect on the good relationships and caring people who have contributed to and sacrificed for you. So, you can focus on all or some of these things, depending on what is happening in your life. To list three to five things for which you can be currently grateful, you can focus on all of them. You can focus on your abilities and skills, which are helping you lead your life properly and better. Earnings in life and so on have given so many opportunities; maybe you can consider recent opportunities. You can think about some of the goals that you have achieved recently. You may reflect on good people who are caring in your life, who are contributing positively to your life, for whom you can be grateful for their presence. So, all these things are different indicators on which you can focus and experience gratitude. This exercise can be done daily, twice a week, or twice a month, depending on the lifestyle and personal preference.

Depending on your lifestyle and time available, you can do this exercise at least once a week or once a month, whichever is suitable for the individual. So, the idea is to keep increasing those exercises intentionally to enhance positive emotions and well-being. So, it will give you a break from looking at things; you don't have to stuff you have in your life, just in your mind.

So that shift can be a conscious shift by doing this kind of exercise. Another way to express gratitude is to directly express it to others who have contributed to your life. One way is to write about it; another is to express gratitude to others who have contributed to your life. For example, one such experiment was conducted by Seligman and his colleagues. They performed a gratitude visit exercise. In condition one, the participants were given one week to write and then hand-deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had been especially kind and caring to them but whom they had never properly thanked, so they were asked to identify some people who had contributed positively to their lives but whom they had never actually properly thanked, and they were asked to write a gratitude letter, thanking them in the letter and hand-delivering it to those persons. So, that was the task given to a group of participants.

Another group of participants was given some self-guided happiness exercises, where they had to think about something, and so on. So, these are the two groups of participants. So, after that one week, they were again measured on their well-being and happiness measures. The result indicated the most significant boost in happiness for the gratitude to visit participants. So, in comparison to condition two, condition one participants reported higher happiness in their lives simply because they wrote gratitude and expressed gratitude to certain people in their lives, which gave a better, higher boost to their happiness compared to participants in condition two, where they did some self-guided exercises. So, this kind of exercise or any intentional activity can be done in so many ways; it is always better to keep it fresh and do such exercises in various ways. For example, one can express gratitude only after a particular trigger, such as hardship. When feeling low, gratitude can be most helpful, especially when experiencing very low emotions. So, practicing gratitude can immediately enhance or shift your mood positively. So that you can get a much better result when going through difficult times in your life. One can also write about gratitude at some times, talk to some friends in other weeks, and express gratitude through art and creativity during different weeks. So, there can be a variety of ways you can express gratitude, and the more variety you involve, the better it is because it will keep you fresh. You are less likely to adapt to such experiences or practices.

The next concept we'll discuss, which is also related to enhancing happiness, is savoring. We'll talk a little bit about the concept of savoring. So, what is savoring? Savoring as an idea is basically a process of upregulating positive emotions. So, you consciously regulate your positive emotions by focusing on specific things and redirecting your attention to stimuli or events that lead to experiences of positive emotions. So, you focus on things, events, and

people, which leads to the experience of positive emotions. You intentionally direct your attention toward those events and things that can lead to positive emotions or experiences.

So, that's a conscious shift in your attention towards those things. That is called upregulating the positive emotions by redirecting your attention. So, savoring basically includes that. In other words, savoring is a strategy to experience more frequent positive emotions. How to increase positive emotion? Savoring is one way you consciously redirect your attention by repeatedly drawing your attention to the experiences and sensations in the present environment that make you happy, proud, grateful, and connected.

So, you consciously redirect your attention. In gratitude, you look at positive things and become thankful. So, the experiences of gratitude lead to positive emotions. Here, it is not about thankfulness. It is more about looking at things or paying attention to positive things. Because the nature of those things is positive, automatically, the moment you focus on that, that whole emotion returns to your memories. So, those are called savor experiences. It involves consciously engaging in thoughts and actions that help individuals fully appreciate and prolong positive emotions. You can prolong positive emotions and increase the frequency of positive emotions by redirecting your attention to the moments or things in your life that can generate positive emotions.

Savoring is a joyful experience that requires attention to all the good things happening in the moment. It could be in the present moment, as well as in the past. We'll talk about that, too. You can also experience savoring by thinking back on experiences of joy or looking forward to something that will be positive in your life. So, savoring can be done in the present moment, and it could be something from the past that has happened, recalling that, or perhaps anticipating something that will come in the future, and so on.

So, all these things can actually lead to the experience of savoring. So, savoring can occur in different forms. One is called anticipatory savoring, which means enjoying the excitement and pleasures before an event actually happens, such as looking forward to a vacation. So, it could be anything that will be positive soon. You anticipate this will happen, and you enjoy that because it is a positive thing that will come.

So, you direct your attention there, and it makes you happy. It can be in the present moment,

Savoring, when you focus on and appreciate a positive experience that is happening in the present moment, like relishing a beautiful sunset or enjoying time with friends. Whatever good is happening in the present moment, you should relish that moment. For example, if you are eating good, tasty food, enjoy it by focusing on its taste, flavors, etc. So that's called savoring. Or you can enjoy the sunset, focusing on that without letting your mind be distracted by problems and other things. Just enjoy the beauty of the sunset. So that's called savoring the present moment. It will enhance positive emotions.

Savoring can also happen for past events, which is called reminiscence savoring, and it basically means reflecting on past experiences to re-experience positive emotions, such as recalling a joyful celebration and achievement. Because so many positive things also happened in the past, you can remember those positive experiences and reminisce about them. So, that is called reminiscence savoring, where you enjoy things; again, you experience all the positive emotions that have happened in the past moments. You recall that, and you recreate it. So, there can be three forms of savoring that we all can experience in our lives. All three of these factors actually enhance positive emotions in our lives.

So, savoring helps individuals counterbalance stress. It helps us build resilience in life. It improves overall life satisfaction by reinforcing positive emotions and memory. So, it counterbalances. So, when we experience too many negative emotions, savoring can balance them by including more positive ones. Although savoring does not have to occur in the present moment all the time, it does require that the person bring the to-be-savored experience into the present moment, at least mentally. Although we can experience savoring from past events or anticipate something in the future, savoring always happens in the present moment because we have to recall those past things in the present moment and think about something good in the present moment only.

So, it is a very present-moment-oriented experience. In other words, besides savoring the present moment, you could think about different things. But the experience of savoring always happens in the present moment.

So, what are the benefits of savoring? Research shows that savoring, enhancing, and prolonging positive emotional experiences by redirecting our attention to things can have multiple psychological benefits. Some of these are listed here. So, it has been linked to greater positive emotions immediately and in the future. For instance, in a study of children from grades 5 to 9, savor and positive effects were initially correlated, and savor later predicted positive

emotions 13 months afterwards. So, for those more likely to savor, it boosts positive feelings in the present moment, but this experience of positive emotions could even prolong into the future. For example, some studies show that for children in grades 5 to 9, their savoring experiences predicted positive emotions even 13 months afterwards.

Similarly, in a survey of 18,000 adults at a technology company, savoring more than mindfulness predicted positive emotions. So, much of this study shows value regarding positive emotions; the impact is immediate and long-lasting. It is also positively related to relationship satisfaction. Mainly, anticipatory savoring was found to be more strongly linked to satisfaction in romantic relationships among college students, and so on. So, savoring the good moments of relationships, especially what you expect in the future, and so on, focusing on those positive things in a relationship also enhances positive emotions, which is good for increasing the quality of the relationship. So, these are some of the benefits associated with it.

Now, let us see what factors can influence savoring. What factors are linked to whether you can savor or not? What are the different factors in the context? Now, research shows there can be several conditions that can influence savoring. One is the rarity or distinctiveness of the experience. What does that mean? According to research, individuals are likelier to savor unique and extraordinary experiences. So, if you experience something unique and extraordinary, that event or experience will likely be savored by individuals. The more uniqueness there is, the more unusual the events are, and the more likely this will contribute to your savoring in life.

This savoring may be more accessible in routine experiences within domains with less exposure and expertise. So, something very rare and extraordinary, such experiences have more potential and lead to more savor experiences. For example, for someone who has never seen the ocean before, standing on the beach for the first time can feel magical, leading to intense savoring of the sights, sounds, and sensations; this person might remember the moment vividly and cherish it more deeply than frequent beachgoers. So, let's say that for someone going to the beach or near an ocean for the first time, because this is a unique experience for that person and the first experience, that person is more likely to savor that moment for a very long time, and it will influence their positive emotions for a very long time. They will cherish everything: the sight, sound, sensations—everything they experience. So, the more an experience is unique, distinctive, and extraordinary, the more it leads to savoring experiences. This is one factor that

can influence behavior. Second, savoring tends to vary depending on the stages of the task or experience. So, what kind of experiences lead to more savor outcomes depends on the task stage. Are you in the middle of the tasks? Have you completed the task? Research indicates that individuals are more likely to experience positive emotions when a task is completed than when it is still in progress.

So, when you are doing a task that has a lot of positive impact on your life, you know, something that is a positive event. So, when you complete the task, you are more likely to succeed than when you are in the middle of the task or still in progress. For example, sports teams or coaches often emphasize staying focused on the next goal even after significant wins in the playoffs or tournaments. So even if somebody has won a match, if it is a playoff, they still need to go to another one; winning is still incomplete. So even though they are in the winning position, they cannot seize that advantage simply because they have not achieved the task of winning. This mindset reflects findings from research that show soccer players experienced positive emotions after winning a game than during halftime, even when leading. So, once it's completed, you can fully serve the moment because now there is no obstacle. So that is something very commonsensical as well. And this is one crucial factor. Similarly, students reported greater savoring of positive feedback after completing a task than when they received feedback midway through.

So, when you complete the task successfully, you achieve it and reach your goal. Then, savoring happens much more than when you are in between tasks. The third factor that can influence savoring is that overcoming past challenges may increase the likelihood of having positive experiences. Those who have faced and conquered adversity may appreciate good moments more deeply. Savoring happens more when you face challenges and difficulties and achieve something. Compared to something given to you very freely, you may not value it as much because you have not invested much in that achievement. On the other hand, if you achieve something with a lot of hard work, obstacles, and challenges, you really become happy about it. And you are more likely to cherish that achievement than when something comes much more easily.

Croft et al. (2014) examined this by surveying approximately 15,000 Western Europeans about their adversities and severe tendencies. They found a positive correlation between past experiences successfully dealt with and savoring tendencies, while current unresolved

adversities were inversely associated with savoring. So, basically, it shows that savoring was positively correlated. Some people are more likely to savor that positive experience when successfully dealing with life's inevitable adversities. So that was more strongly related to savoring than when they could not solve the problem or were still facing challenges and obstacles. So, adversity has not been resolved. Then it does not lead to severance. This suggests that individuals who have overcome hardship are more inclined to savor positive experiences, whereas those still grappling with the ongoing challenge are not. So that also gives us more savoring; when faced with many challenges and difficulties, achieving something is often more severely felt by individuals than things for which they are still struggling.

Now, let us look at some research-based tools in the end. How can we increase savoring in our daily lives? Because this enhances positive emotions. So, how can we apply this concept to an actual strategy? So, these are some of the research-based strategies that I will be discussing here. The one way to increase savoring is to be mindful of sensory experiences. Whatever sensory experience we have from moment to moment in our daily life, we can focus on that without distraction, enhancing our savoring experiences. It may include things like luxuriating or indulging in the senses in a powerful way to enhance savoring by fully engaging in the moment, entirely focusing on the moment you are doing something, and experiencing it in all its sensations. So, this involves concentrating on sensory experiences like the sweetness of a ripe mango, the scent of a bakery, the warmth of the sun, and so on. In one experiment, individuals who focused on the sensory experiences of eating chocolate reported greater pleasure than those who were distracted. So, for example, it could be done at the same time, you eat something: fully focus on the eating experience, don't think too much about other things while eating, focus on the eating, feel the taste, enjoy the taste whenever you are eating something, and that will enhance the eating experience, which will become much more profound than when we eat something and are just distracted, thinking about something else or talking to someone else. We eat a lot of things, and we don't feel anything. Like whatever you have eaten, you don't even consider whether it was tasty. Simply because people get distracted, so the kind of positive experience you could have gained from that experience, you completely miss it, simply because you were distracted. Similarly, whatever things we do, we should focus on that, thoroughly enjoy, and get involved sensorially in whatever experiences come from those experiences. So it could be, you know, eating something, or it could be like smelling something; whatever it is, or even walking and enjoying the sights, and so on. All these things can make one mindful of the sensory experience in the present moment; it will enhance

savoring experiences and increase the positive emotions in our lives.

So creating a mindful, undistracted setting can help transform simple activities like eating or listening to music into enjoyable rituals. One such example is given in the research literature, where an extraordinary instance of this approach comes from the story of concentration camp prisoners. Prisoners were in the concentration camps in the Nazi camps. The most horrible place to live in, where you don't have any freedom, you don't have anything to eat properly, and all kinds of unimaginable, horrible incidents have happened in those camps. Now, despite all this deprivation, for example, in one case, somebody reported that some of these prisoners dined, meaning they imagined dining in their minds, vividly envisioning a lavish meal. They were mentally dressed in fine clothes, visualized elaborate dishes, and tasted fine wines, finding a way to savor even without physical experiences. This is an extreme example, but even without physical expertise, people can enjoy something in their minds, even though, physically, things are the opposite of that. So that is also possible. So, engaging in the five senses can help anyone cultivate pleasures and savoring in daily life, regardless of the circumstances. So this is one possible way by which we can increase suffering in our lives.

Reminiscing is another aspect of past experiences. We can also enhance how to do that reminiscing exercise. Think of some of the happiest moments in your life, times that filled you with joy and left lasting impressions. Some good things that happened in the past could be falling in love, the birth of a child, being moved by a beautiful piece of music, or any other cherished memory. Whatever it is, it depends on the person's life; things could be different. Choose one such moment and, for the next 15 to 20 minutes, write about it in as much detail as possible. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, or making it perfect; express your emotions and whatever you experienced in that moment. Instead, focus on capturing everything about the experience: your thoughts, feelings, emotions, settings, people with you, and other details. Once you are finished, take a moment to relive those positive emotions this memory brings you; you can relive those positive emotions created in your mind. This is how reminiscing can be done to increase positive emotions. Some researchers recommend that, to aid reminiscence, you can use souvenirs, memorabilia, or review your old photographs, which bring back so many good memories. So, you can use all these additional aids in terms of pictures, videos, or anything related to past events that evoke many positive memories. A six-week program designed to help clients reminiscence about positive past experiences improves their well-being and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety. So, this slowly shifts your mind, and you

experience more positive emotions. Obviously, negative emotions will decrease, and positive memories also appear to replace negative ones, providing emotional relief effectively. So, all these things can have a lot of benefits in that sense.

Supporting this finding, a meta-analysis of 128 studies on reminiscing interventions revealed significant improvements in psychological well-being, cognitive performance, and symptoms of depression and chronic physical conditions. These benefits were largely sustained over time, with follow-up showing lasting effects. So, when such interventions were done on participants, they showed that they had many positive impacts, and it was not only short-term; it also remained known and projected in the future.

In some sense, just one postscript is that reminiscing about the good old days is useful; sometimes, thinking about some of the negative situations from the past may help you balance your emotions and ensure you can learn from those mistakes. Now, reminiscing about positive things doesn't mean that you should not remember the mistakes you have made or problems that have happened. Sometimes focusing on that also helps you learn from your earlier mistakes and can positively impact your life. While doing this exercise, you can only focus on positive things, but that doesn't mean you should not focus on things that initially went wrong. That also gives you a lot of learning opportunities. But obviously, while doing this exercise, you have to focus only on the positive aspects. So, it is not like you should not focus on negative things sometimes to learn from those experiences.

The third is about anticipation, which is about the positive things you expect in the future. That is called anticipation. How can we do that in terms of actual strategy? So, anticipation is basically about savoring, which refers to positive emotional experiences and looking forward to future events, moments, or outcomes. It involves the enjoyment and pleasure derived from imagining, planning, and thinking about something pleasurable that will happen in the future. So, anticipation plays a vital evolutionary role, whereby it helps us prepare strategies to cope with future events. So, before the event, you prepare what to do, what to experience, and so on. So, that has benefits in preparing yourself; for example, future focus is associated with school achievement, and so on. In advance, you prepare yourself emotionally and strategically. Anticipation has a lot of benefits in that sense. Anticipating future events, such as upcoming holidays, can temporarily boost positive emotions. However, this effect typically may fade as emotions return to baseline levels. Small events can boost your emotions, but such emotions may not last long simply because they may be isolated events.

In contrast, when you do it regularly, you should reflect on things to look forward to, so it should not be just that sometimes you feel something is happening. Those things will obviously have a very short impact. But when you regularly reflect on things to look forward to each day, even for just a week, it has been associated with both short-term and long-term benefits, including reduced pessimism and decreased emotional exhaustion. When you do them regularly and more frequently, all these things have benefits that last longer. Additionally, writing about traumatic events alongside possible new opportunities may bring, or at least has been shown to increase well-being and growth in non-clinical participants following trauma.

When something traumatic or bad happens in one's life, obviously, this will make people sad, and negative emotions are more likely to be experienced. But when you write about traumatic experiences, you also write about what changes have happened because of this event in your life, what opportunities, and new opportunities arise. So, some positive doors also open for the most negative things in one's life. So, focusing on opportunities alongside trauma and writing about it can also be an excellent exercise to enhance positivity or well-being in one's life. Another postscript or post suggestion is that when anticipating future events, we can focus on positive or negative outcomes accordingly, and things will happen. Focusing on positive outcomes can boost our emotions. Anticipating stress, particularly in the morning, can negatively impact cognitive function, just like other factors. On the other hand, if anticipation includes strategies for overcoming challenges, it can better equip us to handle adversity. So, anticipation can be expressed in these two ways. One is that you focus on the positive things that will happen. It will increase your positive emotions. You can also focus on strategies to overcome challenges that will come in the future. So that will also help you prepare yourself better for the future. However, only fantasizing about positive outcomes can sometimes backfire, as it may reduce the motivation to achieve these goals. So, one important thing is that while anticipating, we should not only fantasize about something good happening without putting in effort and motivation towards achieving it. Only then will it become a fantasy; when things happen, they may not turn out positively. So just fantasizing might not work. Required motivation and effort also have to be directed. Therefore, it is essential to approach anticipation with a clear purpose.

Positive anticipation can enhance emotional well-being, but it may not be beneficial in every situation. So, in many situations where you anticipate something positive, you also need to

work towards it. Just fantasizing and thinking about it may not give you positive results. Because for future things, you still must make it happen, as it has not happened yet. So, you must focus on other things as well. The past thing, obviously, has already happened. So there is nothing more to do. You can only reminisce about what has happened, which is good. So that's how the strategies can differ.

Some tools for anticipation are research-based. One is looking forward to tomorrow's exercise. This can be done for the next seven days. Set aside five minutes daily to write down three positive things, people, events, and activities you look forward to experiencing tomorrow. So, you can focus on the positive people you will meet, the events, or the activities you will do. For the next one, focus on these three positive things you anticipate. Especially for the next day, you can only think about the immediate near future. After listing them, choose one thing you are especially excited about, then spend the next 5 minutes imagining it in as much detail as possible, allowing yourself to anticipate and enjoy it before you experience it fully.

So, whatever excites you more, focus on that and enhance your positive emotion by focusing on every detail. Positive mental timetable exercises. Another thing that people can do is, for the next week, each night before bed, take a few minutes to vividly imagine four positive events that could happen the following day. These events could be small joys, like receiving a text from someone you care about, eating your favorite meal, or engaging in work you love. So, in all these things, the focus is on the fact that you don't have to focus on something extraordinary happening to do something like that. All these things can be included in the daily small positive things. So, as you picture each event, try to engage all the senses, imagining the sights, sounds, smells, and textures as if they are happening in real life. So positively, you travel through time in the future and experience it beforehand. So, that is what exercise is all about, and that can also enhance positive emotions.

The third one is called the prospective writing exercise. If you have recently gone through some challenging experiences, set aside 15 minutes once a week for the next month to write about them, whatever challenges have happened. In times of adversity, many people feel a sense of loss and recognize that certain doors have closed. However, new doors may have also opened, which is very important. When challenges or difficult things happen, people become sad and depressed, primarily because they think many doors are closed in their lives. But we can also focus on the many doors that could have opened, or already have opened, because this event

has happened in one's life. These new opportunities might include trying something different, setting new goals because old goals are no longer working, forming new connections or relationships, or making meaningful changes in one's life.

So you can focus on all these new possibilities that could happen or come because many old doors have closed. So that is called a prospective writing exercise. You can write about all these things. All these possibilities can coexist with the losses. People think that positive things cannot happen if loss has occurred, not like this. Both things can happen at the same time. That does not mean your pain will decrease. Because of negative things, pain will be present, but many new doors could also open. So, both can exist together.

Use this time to write about any new doors that have opened or may open for you in the months ahead, considering the future opportunities. You can write about it, as that could also be another anticipation exercise, which could positively contribute to your emotions and well-being. So, these are some of the interventions related to enhancing happiness and positive emotions. Today, we discussed two specific interventions: one is the gratitude intervention, and the other is the intervention related to savoring and different exercises associated with each of these two concepts. We'll talk about some other things in the following lecture. With this, I stop here. Thank you.