

# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: THE CUTTING EDGE

13 Juli 2014

Berlin

14:00-18:00

Martin E. P. Seligman

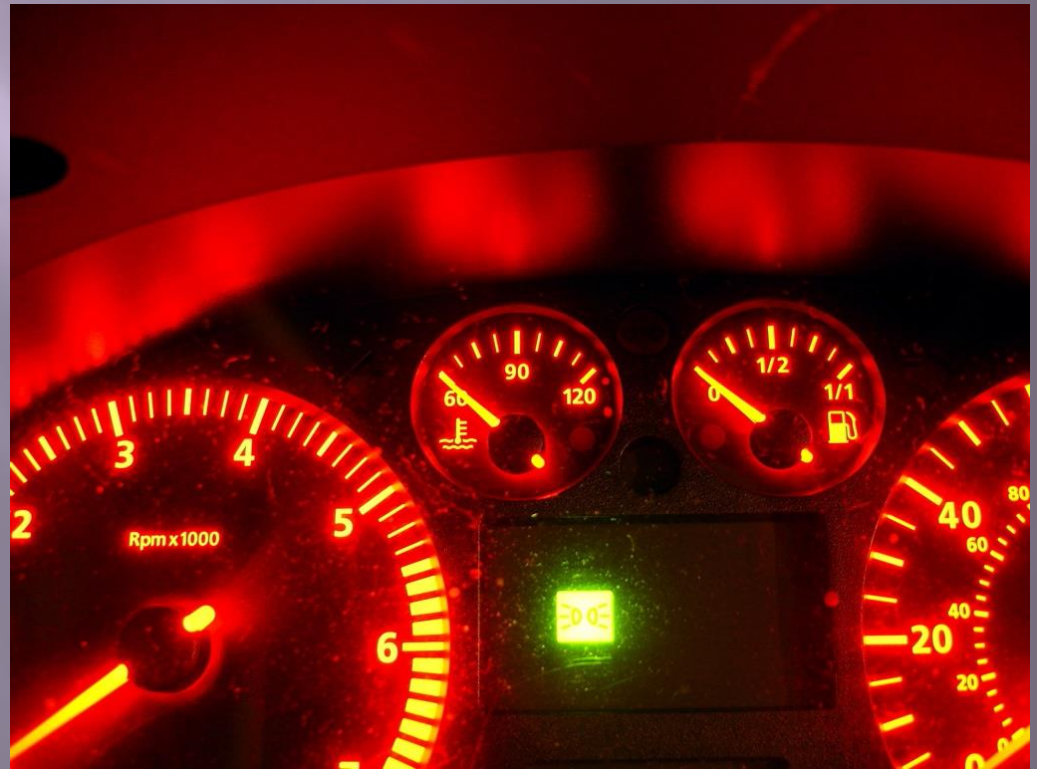
[marty@apa.org](mailto:marty@apa.org)

# Outline

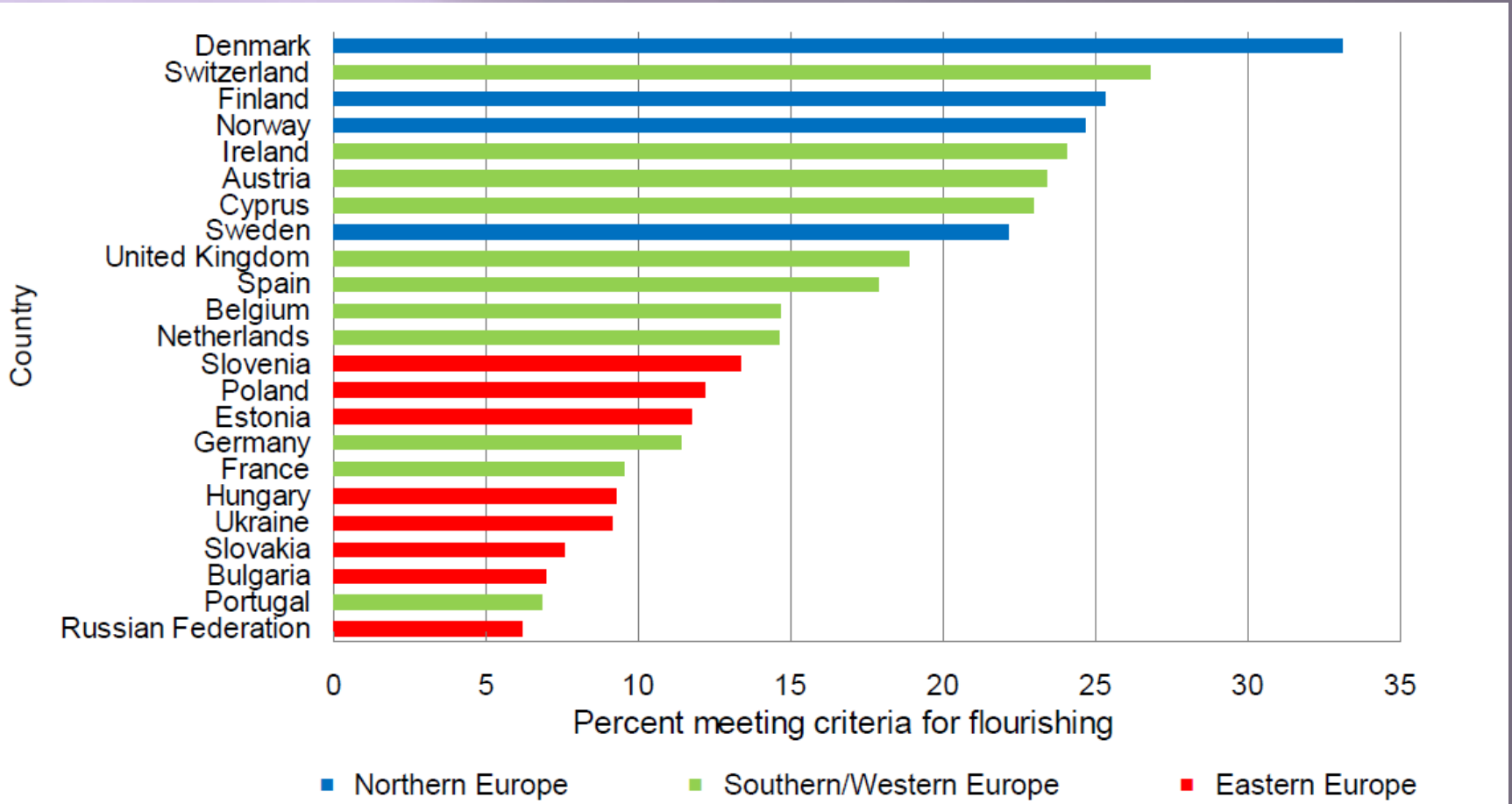
- ▣ Well Being as Individual, Corporate and National Goal
- ▣ What is Well Being?
- ▣ Wealth and Well Being
- ▣ How to Measure PERMA
- ▣ How to Build PERMA
  - ▣ Positive Emotion (Hunt the Good Stuff)
  - ▣ Engagement (Optimism and Optimal Performance)
  - ▣ Relationships (ACR)
  - ▣ Meaning (Fun vs Altruism)
  - ▣ Accomplishment (GRIT)
  - ▣ Invisible Hand
- ▣ BREAK
- ▣ Positive Education
- ▣ US Army
- ▣ Prospection
- ▣ Imagination
- ▣ Politics of Well Being

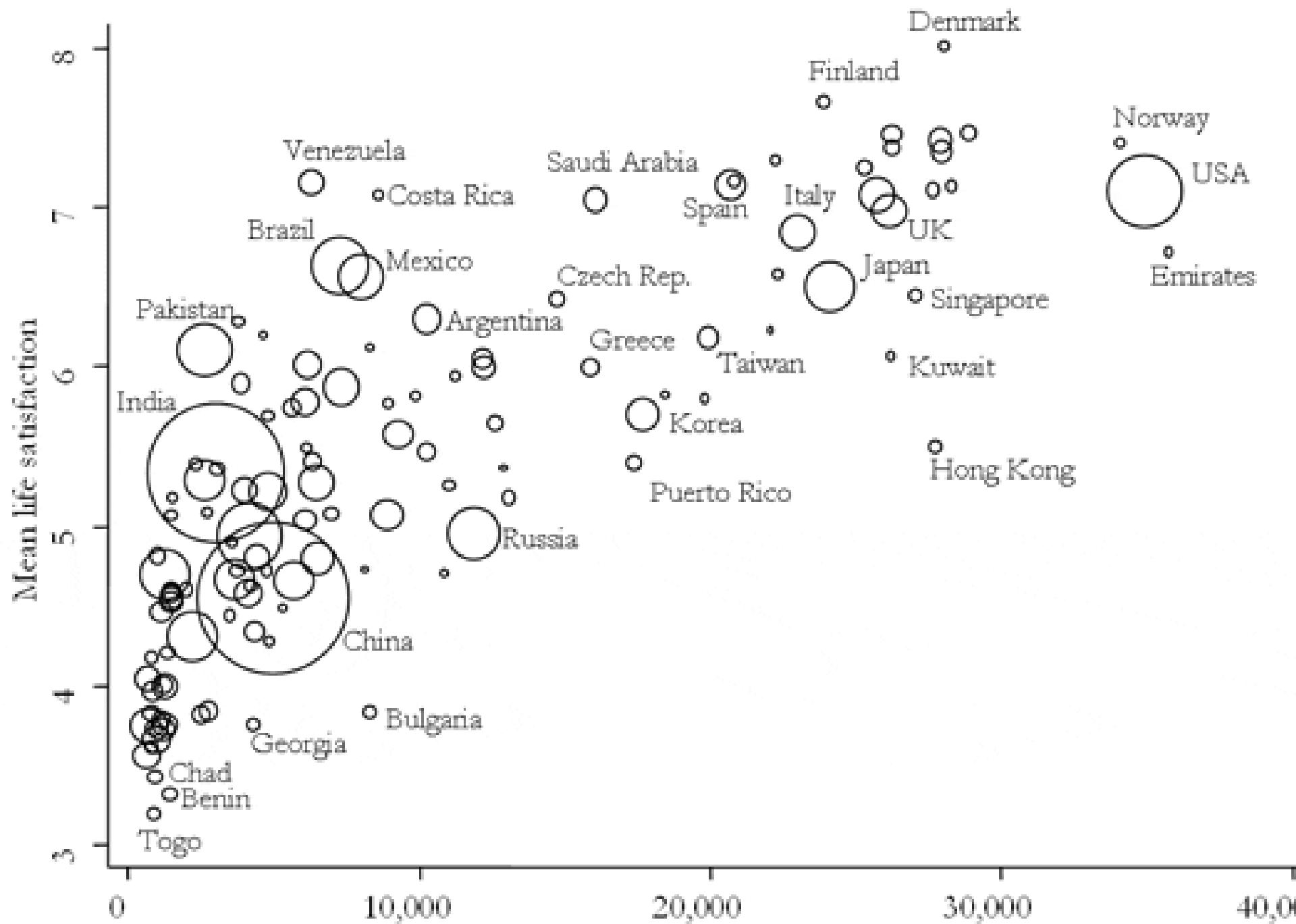
# Flourish (PERMA)

- Positive Emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment



# Huppert & So 2010

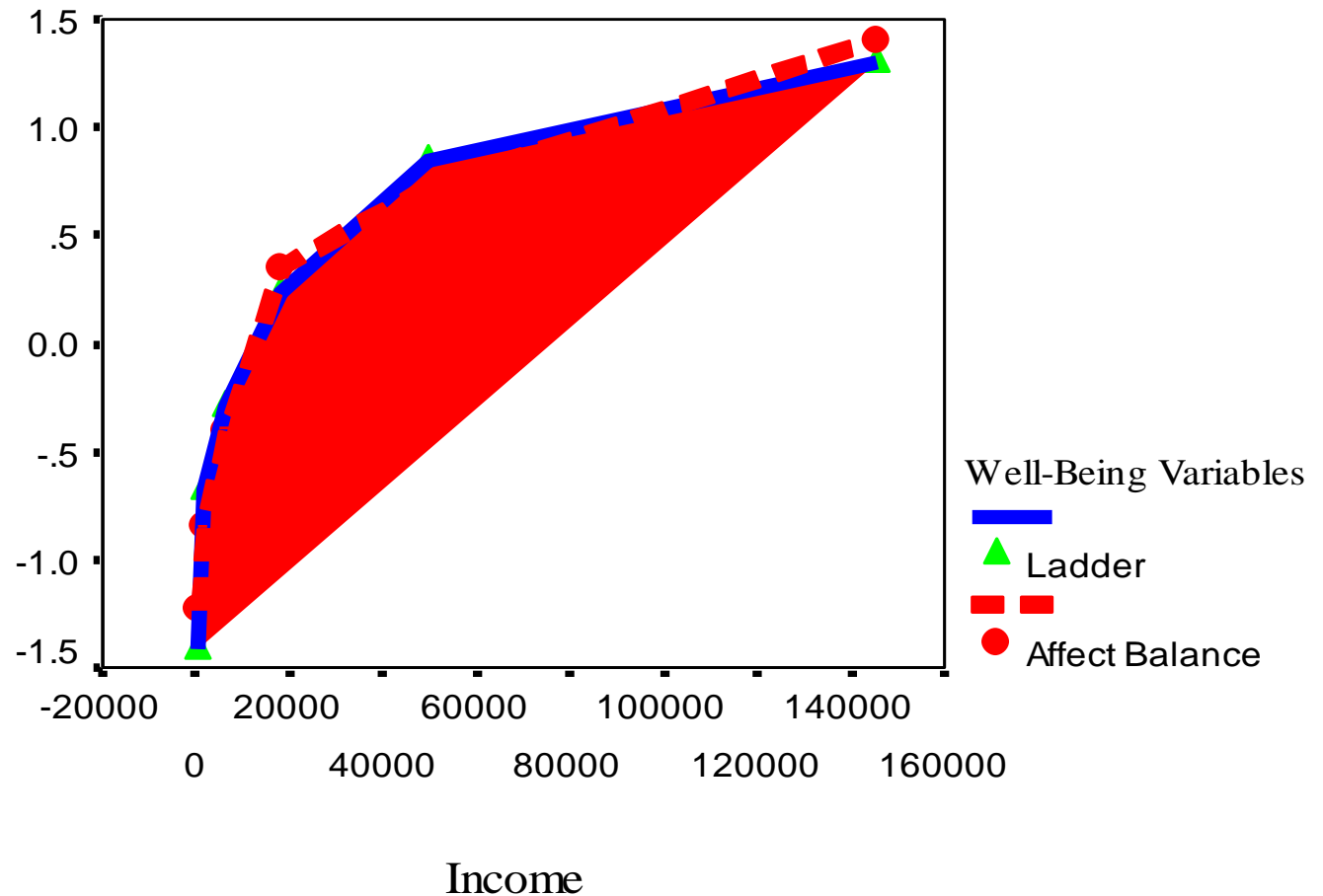




# Declining Effects of Money

Figure 2

Declining Marginal Utility



# Inequality & Well Being

- ▣ Variance Accounted for
- ▣ Fairness & Well being

# PERMA

Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment

*Each is **measurable***

*Each is **teachable***



# QUESTIONNAIRES (FREE)

[www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org)

But the days of tests are coming to an end

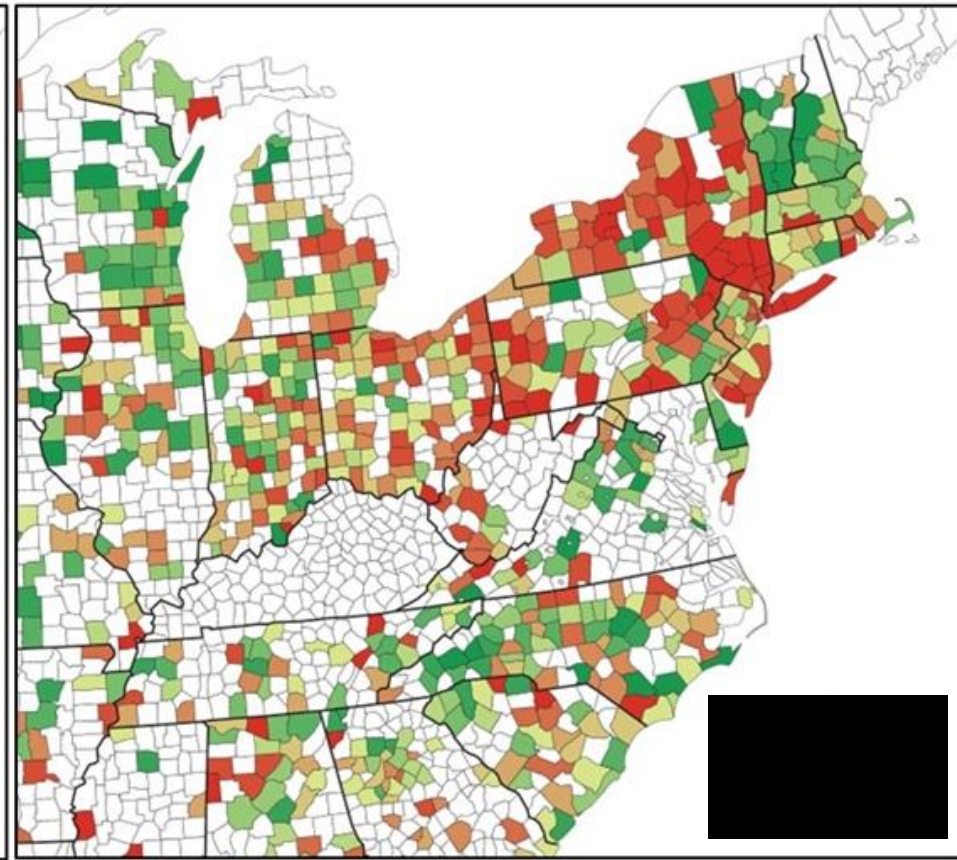
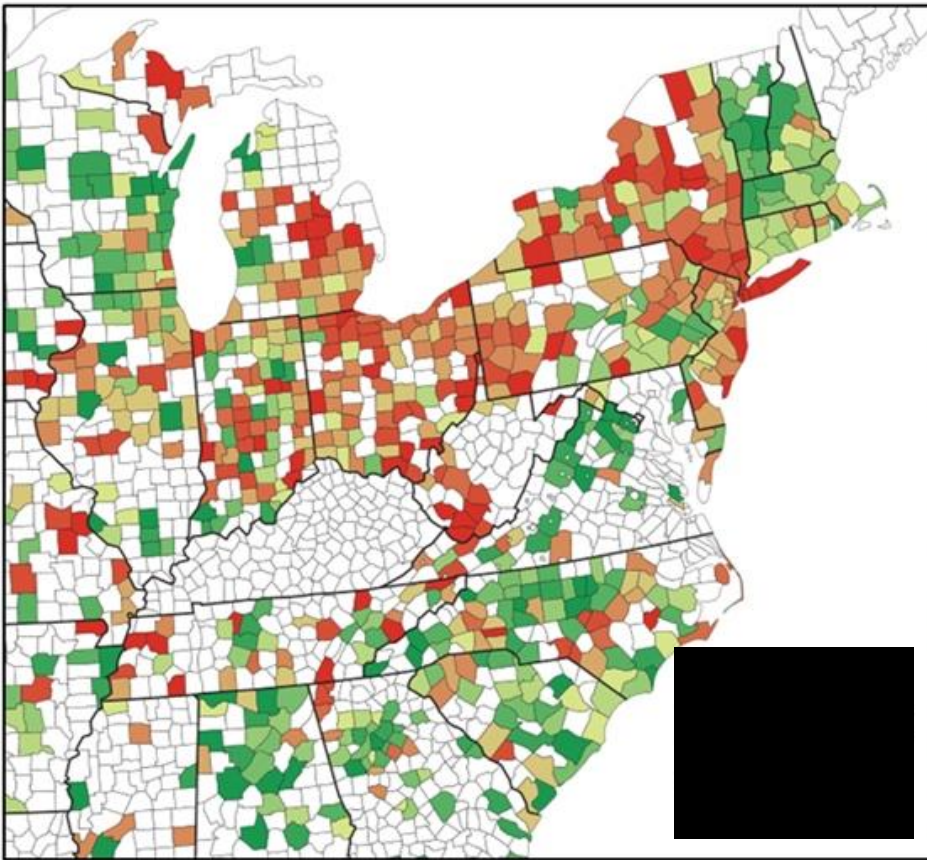




# Atherosclerotic Heart Disease (red = more deaths)

Reported by CDC

Predicted by Twitter



$$r_{\text{weighted}} = .67$$



# Protective vs CHD

A word cloud visualization of text data. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner. The most prominent words, shown in larger fonts, include 'looking', 'afternoon', 'folks', 'conference', 'office', 'great', 'interesting', 'trip', 'morning open use', 'finished', 'thanks', 'project', 'lots', 'email', 'our', 'week', 'presentation', 'forward', 'customer', 'market', 'share', 'present', 'running', 'discussion', 'lunch', 'will', 'discovered', 'fabulous', 'testing', 'we've', 'emails', 'fantastic', 'foundation', 'grateful', 'mention', 'of', 'for', 'from', 'experience', 'has', 'holiday', 'offer', 'among', 'helpful', 'seems', and 'presentation'. The colors used for the words are primarily shades of blue, purple, red, and grey.

# Risk for CHD

## Atherosclerotic Heart Disease



(pos. corr.)

# PERMA is Teachable



**INDIVIDUALS**



# PERMA

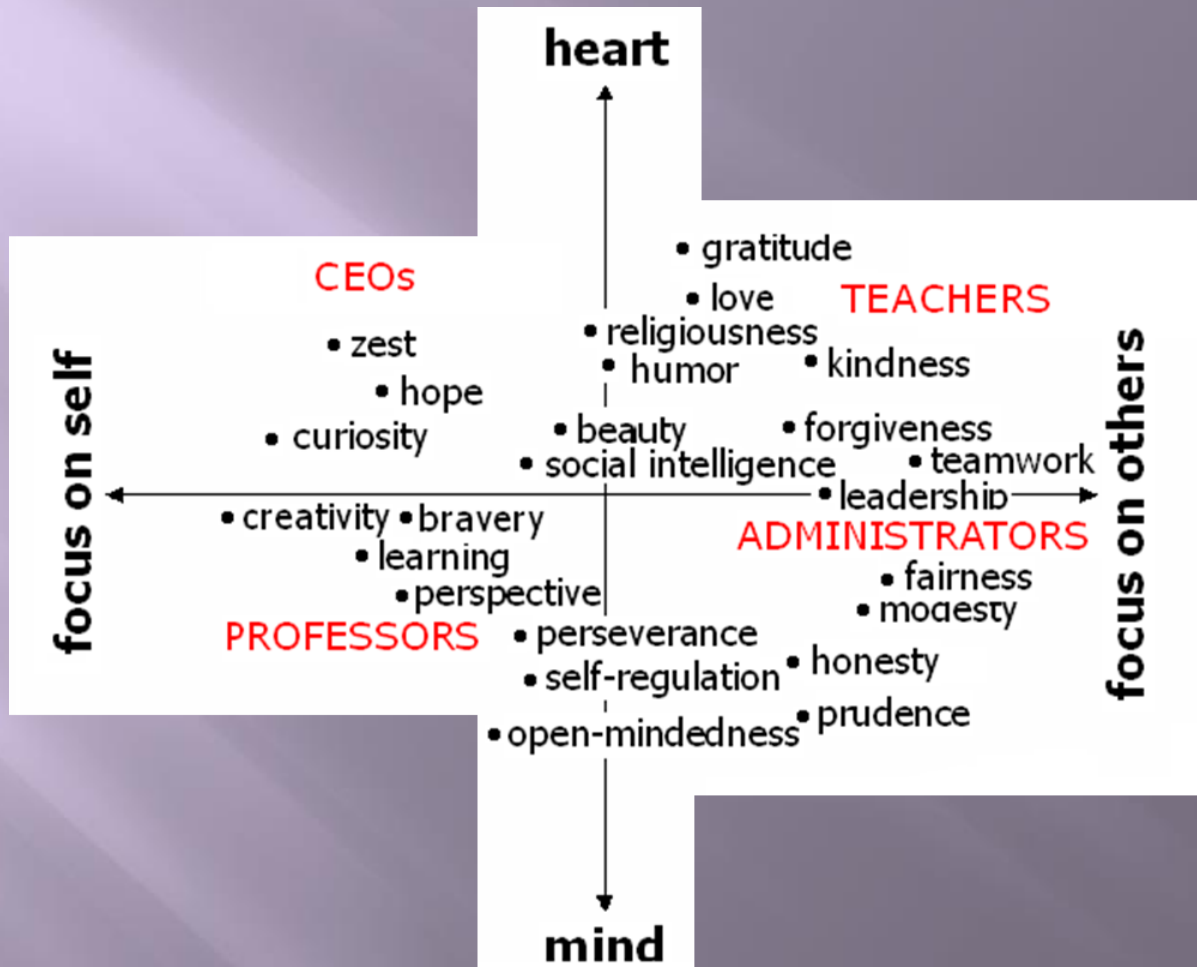
## Positive Emotion

*3 Good Things*

# PERMA Engagement

*Signature Strengths*

[www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)



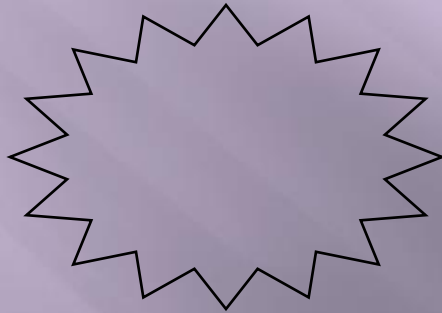
# PERMA Relationships

# Active Constructive Responding

Constructive

Destructive

Active



Passive

# PERMA Meaning

*Belonging To and Serving  
Something Bigger than Self*

Altruism versus Pleasure

# PERMA - Accomplishment<sup>6</sup>

*GRIT*

Who Never Gives Up?

West Point

Grades

Spelling Bee

# The Invisible Hand



# Schools, Army, Nations

Positive Education

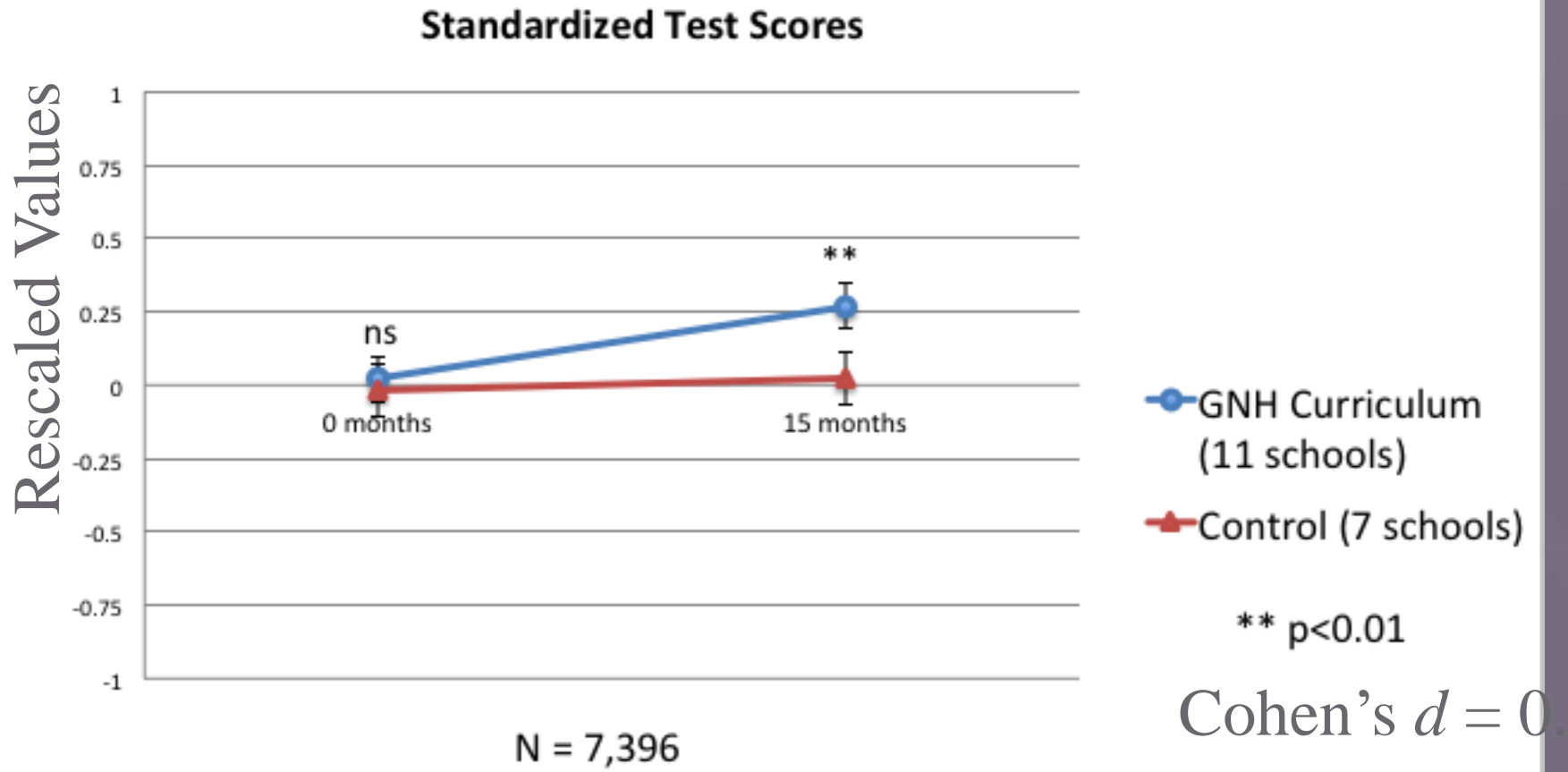
IPEN

Emily Larson  
<[emily@floreat.org.uk](mailto:emily@floreat.org.uk)>

# Bhutan

- ▣ 18 secondary schools (~8,000 students) in three representative regions of Bhutan
- ▣ Randomly assigned to:
  1. GNH Curriculum condition (11 schools)
  2. Control condition (7 schools)

# Results: Academic Achievement



# US Army

- ▣ Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness

# Mental Toughness Skills

**Real-time Resilience:**  
Shut down counterproductive Thinking to enable greater concentration and focus on the task at hand.

**Mental Games:**  
Change the focus away from counterproductive thinking to enable greater concentration and focus on the task at hand.

**Put It In Perspective:**  
Stop catastrophic thinking, reduce anxiety, and improve problem solving by identifying the Worst, Best, and Most Likely outcomes of a situation.

**Problem Solving:**  
Accurately identify what caused the problem and identify solution strategies.

**Detect Icebergs:**  
Identify deep beliefs and core values that fuel out-of-proportion emotion and evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of these beliefs. Identify deep beliefs and core values that promote rejuvenation.

**Avoid Thinking Traps:**  
Identify and correct counterproductive patterns in thinking through the use of Critical Questions.

**ATC:**  
Identify your Thoughts about an Activating Event and the Consequences of those Thoughts.

# Thought-Consequence Connections

Thoughts	Emotions/Reactions
<p><b>Loss</b> (I have lost something.)</p>	<p><b>Sadness/Withdrawal</b></p>
<p><b>Danger</b> (Something bad is going to happen and I can't handle it.)</p>	<p><b>Anxiety/Agitation</b></p>
<p><b>Trespass</b> (I have been harmed.)</p>	<p><b>Anger/Aggression</b></p>
<p><b>Inflicting harm</b> (I have caused harm.)</p>	<p><b>Guilt/Apologizing</b></p>
<p><b>Negative comparison</b> (I don't measure up.)</p>	<p><b>Embarrassment/Hiding</b></p>
<p><b>Positive contribution</b> (I contributed in a positive way.)</p>	<p><b>Pride/Sharing, planning future achievements</b></p>
<p><b>Appreciating what you have received</b> (I have received a gift that I value.)</p>	<p><b>Gratitude/Giving back, paying forward</b></p>
<p><b>Positive future</b> (Things can change for the better.)</p>	<p><b>Hope/Energizing, taking action</b></p>

# Hunt the Good Stuff

## Key Principles

- ▣ **Counteracts the negativity bias:** You can counteract the negativity bias—the tendency to pay more attention to bad events than positive events—by recording three good things on a regular basis.
- ▣ **Optimism:** Optimism is a primary target of Hunt the Good Stuff.





# Avoid Thinking Traps

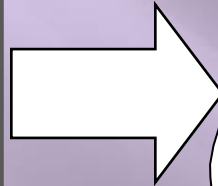


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# ATC Model and Thinking Traps

## Activating Event

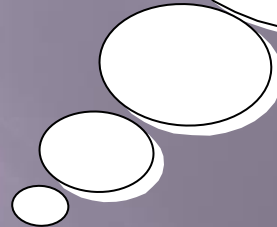
The trigger: a challenge, adversity, or positive event



## Thoughts

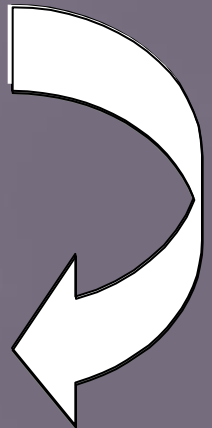
Your interpretations of the Activating Event; what you say to yourself

- ❑ **Jumping to Conclusions**
- ❑ **Mind Reading**
- ❑ **Me, Me, Me**
- ❑ **Them, Them, Them**
- ❑ **Always, Always, Always**
- ❑ **Everything, Everything, Everything**



## Consequences: ER

**E:** Emotions  
**R:** Reactions



# Put It In Perspective



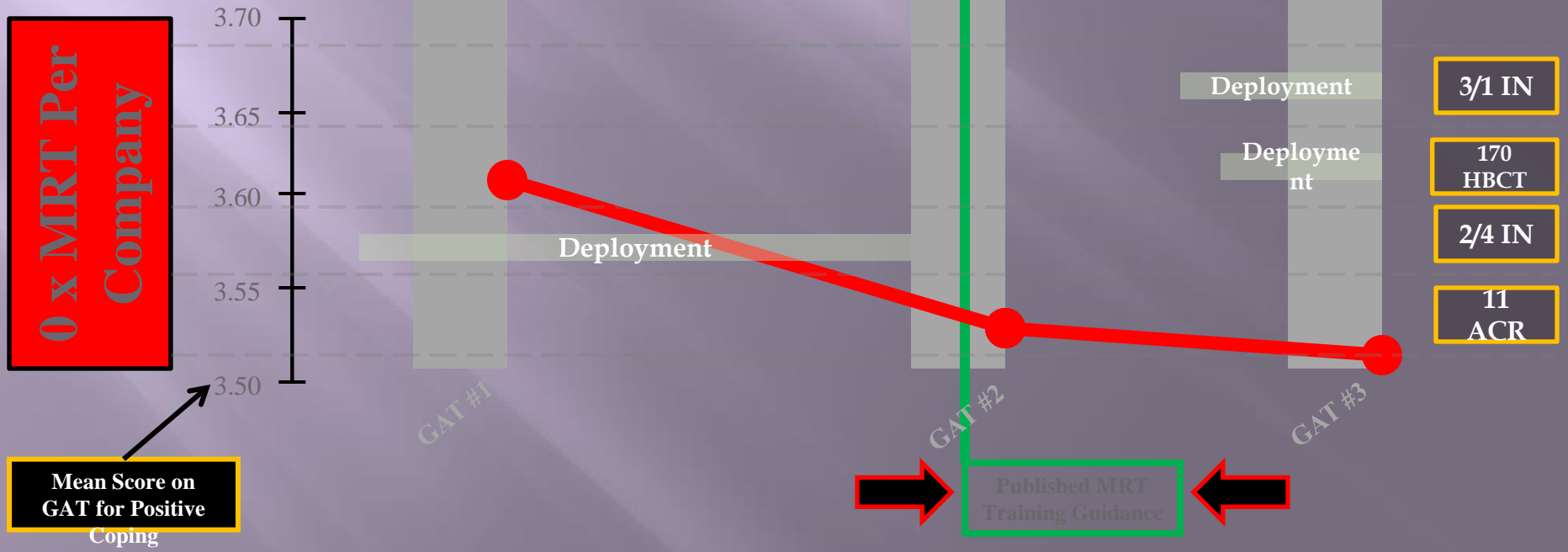
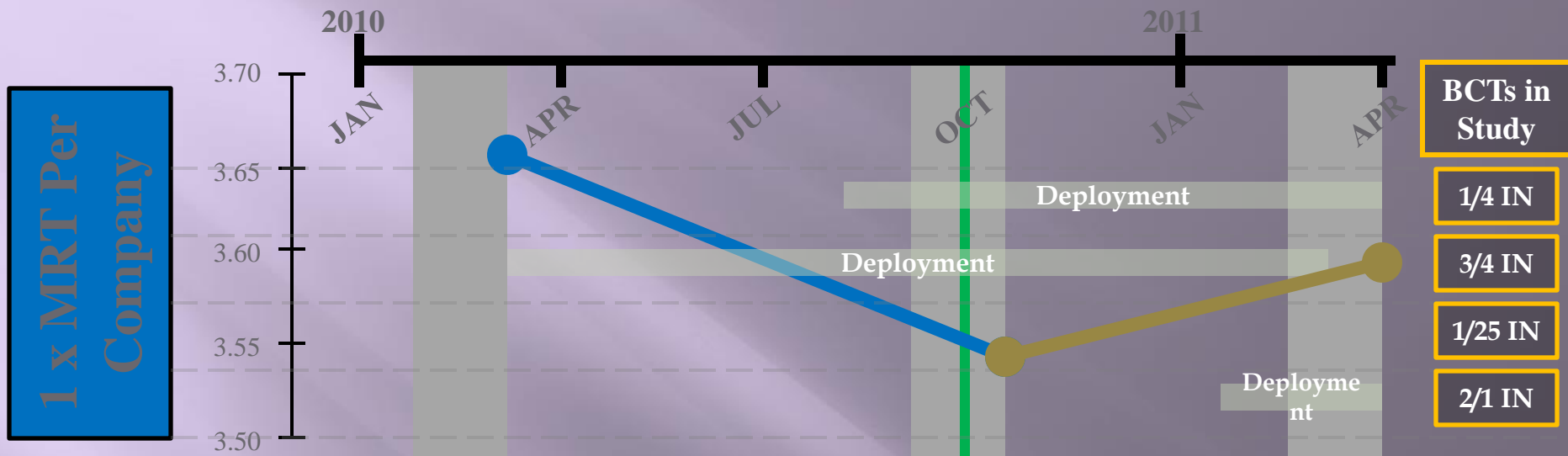
You are  
here

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# PIIP Steps

- ▣ Step 1: List worst case outcomes.
- ▣ Step 2: List best case outcomes.
- ▣ Step 3: List most likely outcomes.
- ▣ Step 4: Identify plan for dealing with most likely.

# Findings: Positive Forms of Coping (Scoring Higher is Better)



# Frequency of Diagnoses: Resilience Training vs no Resilience Training

## □ Mental Health Problems or Substance Abuse Problems Following Deployment (90 days)

□			
□	Training	Mental Health	Substance Abuse
□	(n = 4,983)	221 (4.44%)	58 (1.16%)
□	Non-training		
□	(n = 2,247)	114 (5.07%)	64 (2.85%)
□	Total		
□	(n = 7,230)	335 (4.63%)	122 (1.69%)
□			





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Army Live Blog

News Releases

Soldiers Magazine

STAND-TO!

## Study concludes Master Resilience Training effective

January 24, 2012

By **David Vergun**

+1 27 Like 104 people like this.



*Spc. Gerald Schumacher of 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, climbs a mountain Jan. 11, 2012, in Watapur district, Kunar province, Afghanistan. The U.S. Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program helps prepare Soldiers like Schumacher for the physical and emotional rigors of combat.*

FORT MEADE, Md. (Army News Service, Jan. 24, 2012) -- The Master Resilience Training aspect of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness is working well. That's the conclusion of an Army report, released last month, covering a 15-month period of statistical evaluation.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, or CSF, was launched in 2009 to teach Soldiers how to be psychologically strong in the face of adversity, such as combat. The program, also available to family members and DA civilians, was designed at the University of Pennsylvania by behavioral specialists using proven research-based methodologies.

### Related Links

[Army.mil: Inside the Army News](#)

[STAND-TO!: Comprehensive Resilience Modules](#)

[Comprehensive Soldier Fitness](#)

[Comprehensive Soldier Fitness director visits Fort Hood](#)

# New Initiatives

- Prospection
- Imagination
- Creativity



- ▣ Positive Psychology: Deeper Omission

- ▣ The Homo SAPIENS Model

Past experience

plus genes

plus drives

plus present stimuli

# Homo Prospectus Model

- ▣ Past and Present matter ONLY for Future
- ▣ Mental Simulations of Possible Futures
- ▣ Default Circuit
- ▣ 50 second Oscillation
- ▣ Evaluation of Possible Futures

What if vision  
is not registration of the present,  
but an hallucination of the future?



What if memory  
is not a file drawer of photographs,  
but a hope chest of possibilities?



What if emotion  
is not agitation from the now,  
but guidance for the future?





What if knowing a person is not about the last crossroad they faced, but what they will do at the next one?



What if action  
is not driven by the past,  
but drawn into the future?





What if the mind is not a storehouse of knowledge, but an engine of prediction?

# TEMPORAL ORIENTATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE



Gregory Park,  
H. Andrew Schwartz,  
Evan Weingarten,  
Jonah Berger,  
Maarten Sap,  
George Wan,

Johannes C. Eichstaedt,  
Margaret L. Kern,  
Martin E. P. Seligman,  
& Lyle H. Ungar



# Temporal Orientation

How much one thinks about the  
**past, present, and future**

# Thinking about the Future is Good

Future-oriented thinking predicts:

- Better study habits, higher grades
- Less smoking, alcohol, and drug use
- More exercise
- Saving money and financial planning
- Poverty as Present-mindedness

How can we measure *when*  
people are **thinking** about?

How can we measure *when* people are **thinking** about?

Look at *when* they are **writing** about in social media (Facebook, Twitter)

# Method

- I. Ask human raters to classify 5,000 messages as past, present, or future



## Example messages:

**When** are these messages talking about?

1. :) *today was actually pretty good*

past

2. *is listening to awesome new album by the Eagles!*

present

3. *considering trying something new tomorrow :D*

future

# Method

1. Ask human raters to classify 5,000 messages as past, present, or future
2. Using human ratings to train machine learning model
3. Apply model to 345,000 more messages written by 3,300 Facebook users ( $\approx 100$  messages/user)

Across 345,000 messages,

≈ 60% are **present**

≈ 25% are **past**

≈ 15% are **future**

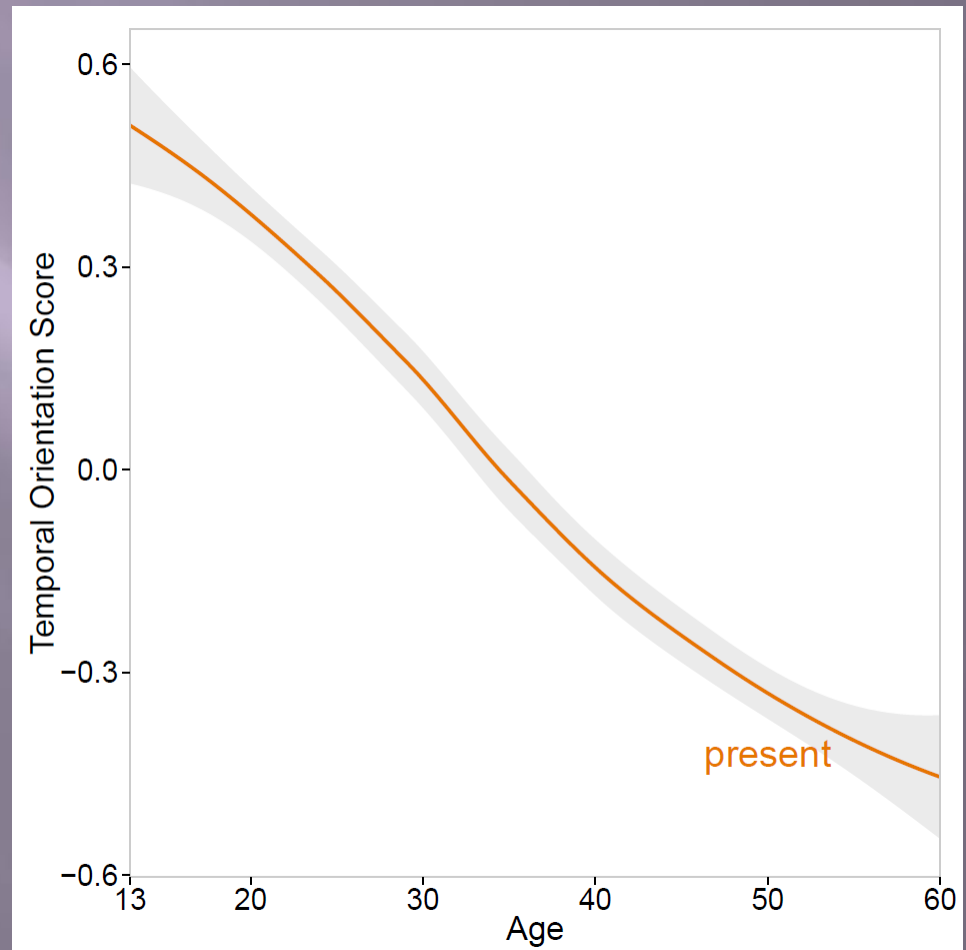
Caveat: These Media Pull for  
the Present

# Method

1. Ask human raters to classify 5,000 messages as past, present, or future
2. Using human ratings to train machine learning model
3. Apply model to 345,000 more messages written by 3,300 Facebook users ( $\approx 100$  messages/user)
4. Compare individuals

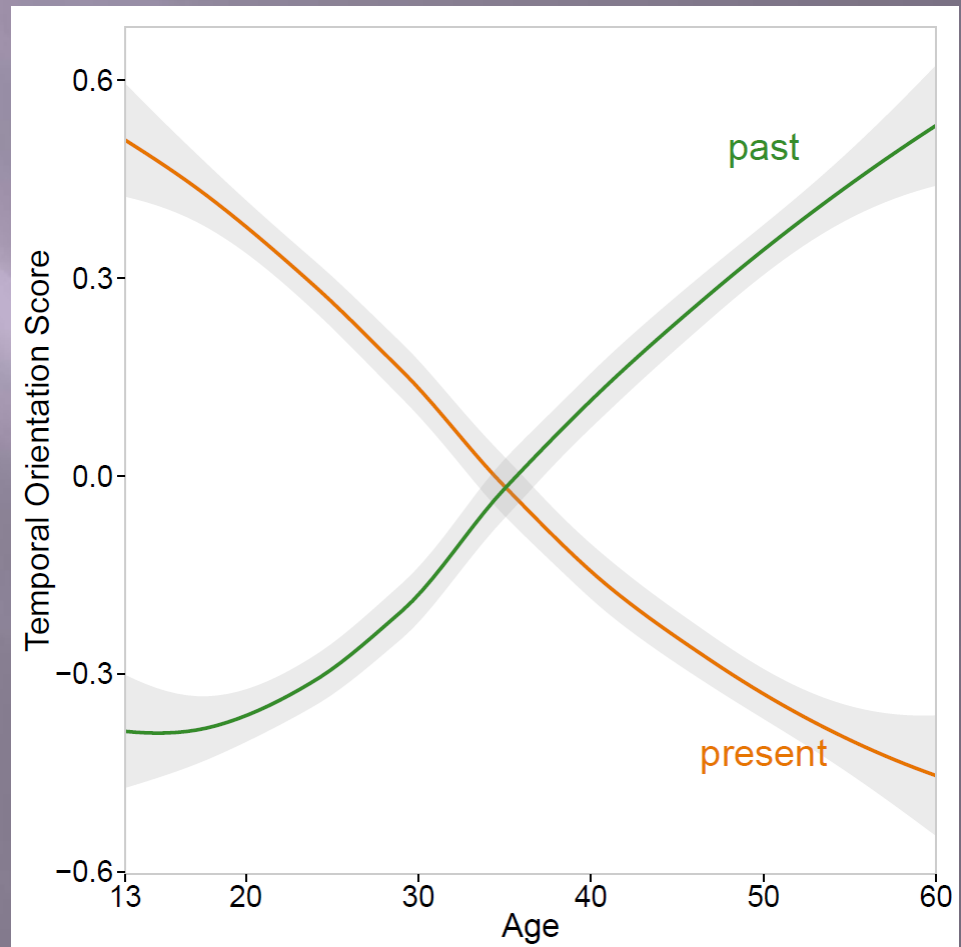
# Age Differences

*Older* users write  
less about the **present**



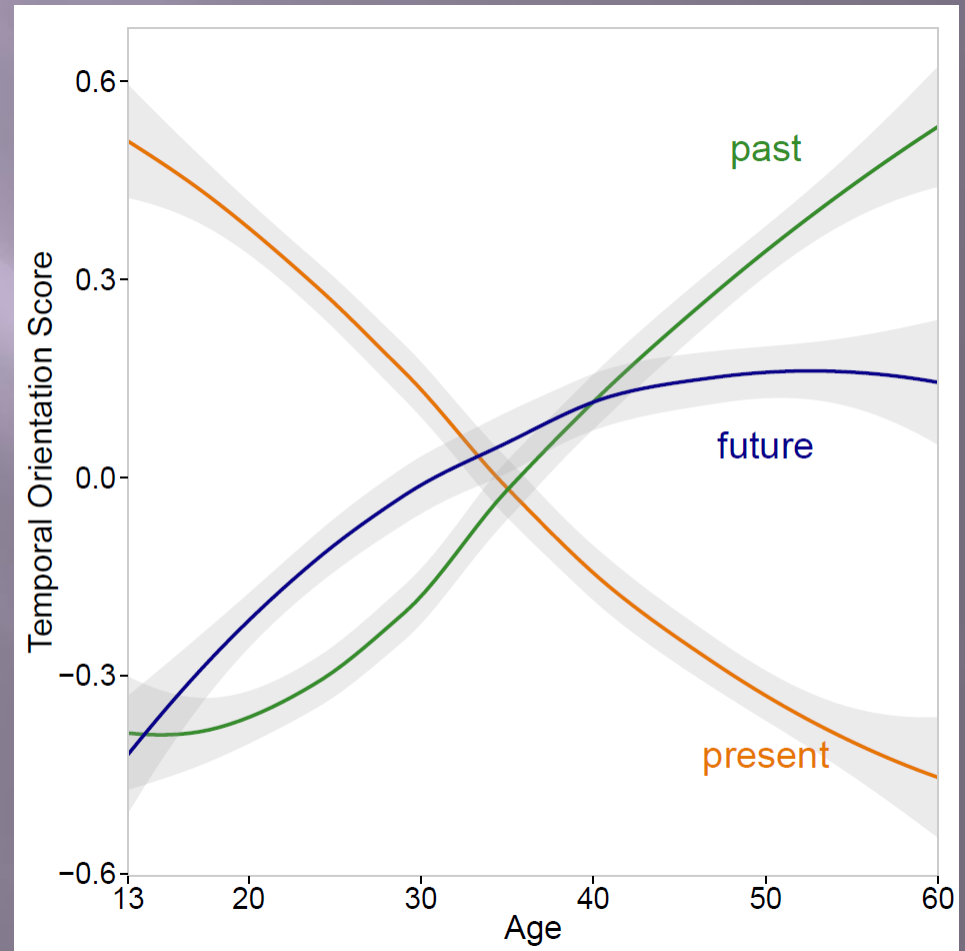
# Age Differences

*Older users write*  
less about the **present**  
more about the **past**



# Age Differences

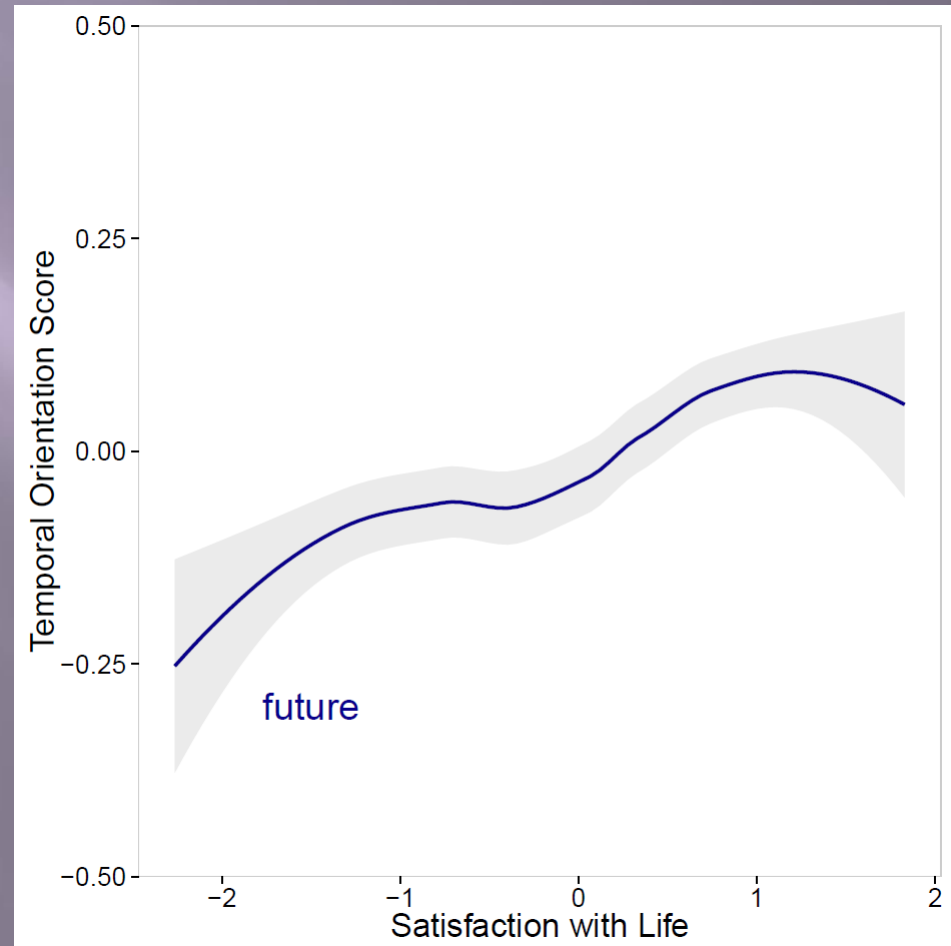
*Older users write*  
less about the **present**  
more about the **past**  
more about the **future**



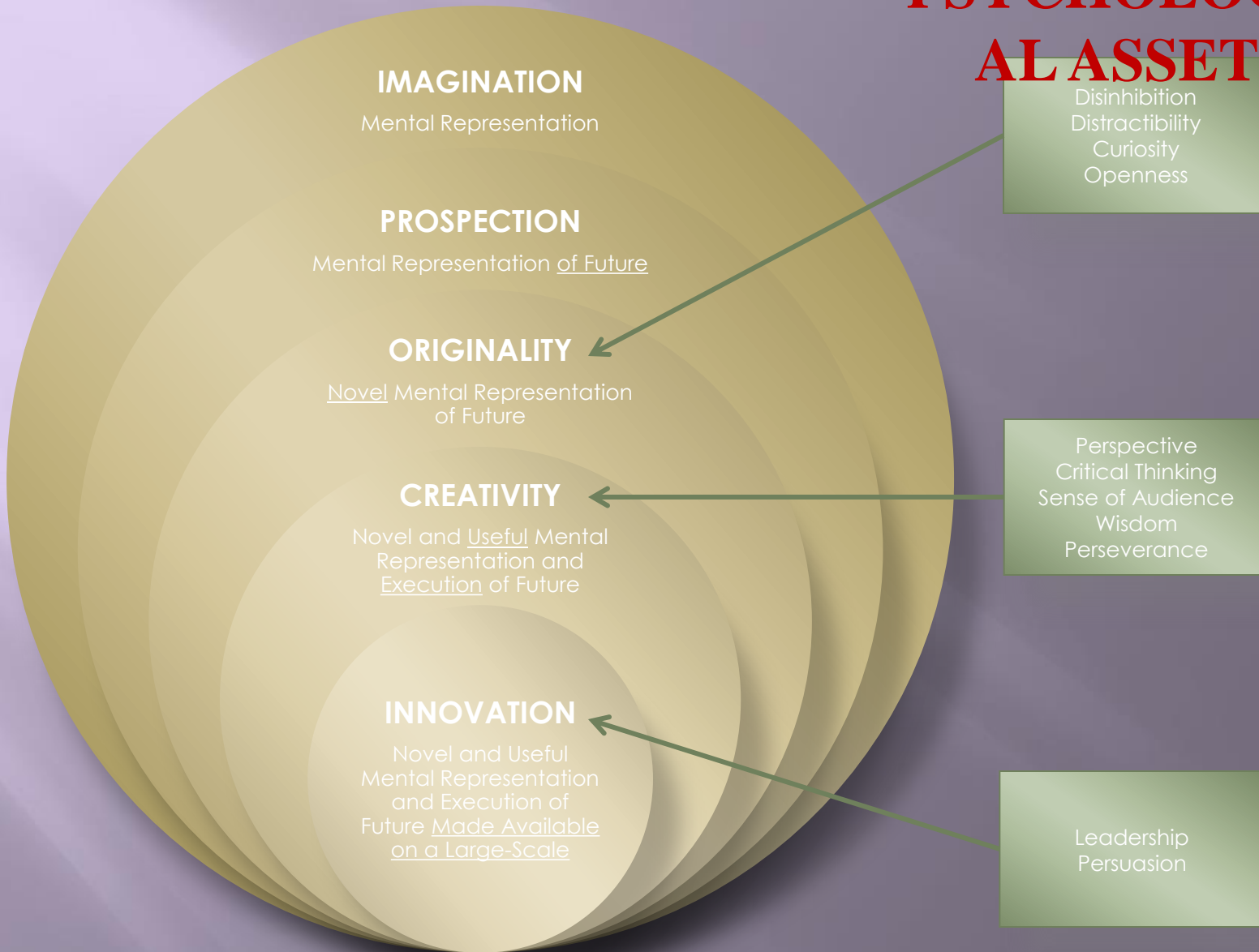


# Satisfaction with Life

*More satisfied* users write  
more about the **future**  
(no correlation with **past**,  
or **present**)



# PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSETS

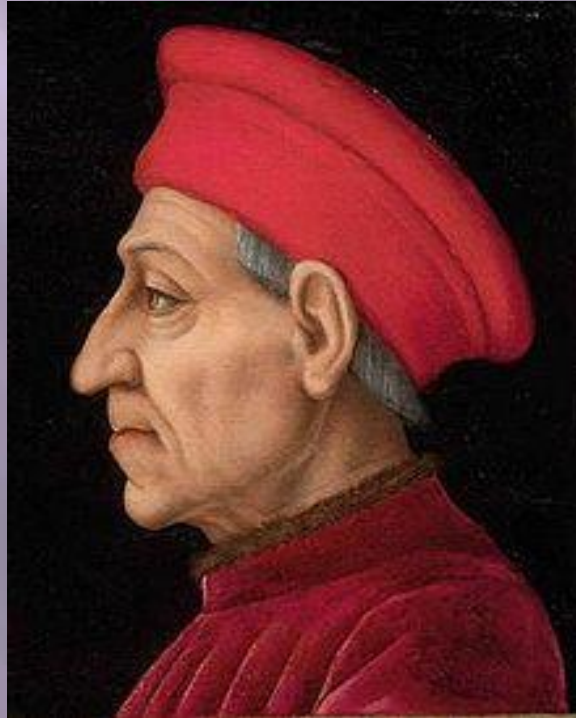


# Imagination Institute

- ▣ 15 grants X \$200,000
- ▣ Imagination Quotient
- ▣ Imagination Intervention
- ▣ Population (Education, Arts, Corporations)
- ▣ <http://imagination-institute.org/>
- ▣ Advancing the Science of Imagination Toward an "Imagination Quotient" Grants of up to \$200,000 will be awarded to recipients

# Our Florentine Moment

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# Politics of Well Being

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Military & Economic Centuries

What is Wealth For? GDP vs GWB

The Safety Net and Florence

The Camel, The Rebel, & The Child Reborn

What can every human being say “Yes” to?

- More Positive Emotion
- More Engagement
- More Noble Purpose
- More Positive Relationships
- More Positive Accomplishment

Downstream Effect of PERMA

# Sources & Resources

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[www.positivepsychology.org](http://www.positivepsychology.org)

(Literature)

[www.psych.upenn.edu/seligman](http://www.psych.upenn.edu/seligman)

(Literature & Manuals)

[www.authentic happiness.org](http://www.authentic happiness.org)

(Questionnaires)

[seligman@psych.upenn.edu](mailto:seligman@psych.upenn.edu)

Flourish, 2011: N.Y.: Free Press (My New Book)