

Newsletter

Maytiv- School of Psychology

Issue 2

March 2012

We are happy to publish the second issue of the newsletter of the Maytiv Center— the center for the research and application of positive psychology— at the School of Psychology at The Interdisciplinary Center at Herzliya. This issue contains information regarding training and intervention programs, which are taught by Maytiv Center guides to various target audiences and in various frameworks in Israel. In addition, this issue contains tools for the research and exploration of positive psychology. Enjoy! The Maytiv Center Staff.

Positive Psychology in Kindergartens in Ramat Gan



Can children learn positive psychology? Absolutely. In fact, the Maytiv Center believes that children are an excellent target population. Since November, a team of coordinators and kindergarten teachers in the Municipality of Ramat Gan have been undergoing positive psychology training procedures in order to learn how to convey positive psychology messages to kindergartners. This focus on children allows the use of the knowledge that has been accumulated through research in positive psychology to enable a process that will prevent emotional distress and strengthen a positive worldview, even at such a young age. In fact, all of the core components of positive psychology can be applied at a young age. The kindergarten teacher needs to reflect the child's strengths, focus on his or her unique qualities and talents, designate appropriate targets based on the child's strengths, recognize that beliefs create reality, and allow the child to experience failures and learn from them, while also reflecting and emphasizing his or her successes! These are the most important milestones of proper emotional development for this age.

Positive Psychology in Children's Books

Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar and Shirley Yuval Yairi are currently publishing two children's books in the "Real Heroes" series. The two principles in the books, and which are drawn from positive psychology, are focusing on our strengths, what we have, and the permission to fail - because we only truly learn from failures.

The books tell the story of a typical Israeli family, the Hermon family. In each book a different member of the family encounters a familiar issue of daily life, and learns how to deal with it through the story of a historical figure. The reader is invited to identify with the characters- both the modern and historical character - and through their experiences to learn to overcome their own difficulties. "**Thomas and I**", the first book, invites children to meet Thomas Edison and the principle by which the greatest inventor in history operated:

Learn to fail, or fail to learn!

The second book, "**Helen and I**", introduces the incredible story of Helen Keller, and teaches them another important principle: when we appreciate what we have, the "have" increases.

At the end of each book there is a page for parents, which explains positive psychology and the methods that it offers for dealing with difficulties. The authors explain: "As parents, we can strengthen and influence our children's "mental resilience muscles" by what we say and read to them, and even more so, by the examples that we set. The books address the most basic emotional questions of our lives, and present the lenses through which positive psychology suggests we look - lenses that help us focus on what works, and see our strengths more clearly. Lenses that affect the questions that we ask and the answers that we receive from reality".



Desert Challenge Conference 2012 to Promote Therapeutic Interventions through Challenge and Adventure for At-Risk Youth, 14/2/2012- 16/2/2012, Khan Habsamim, Ha'Arava, Israel

Lotan's Way is a nonprofit Israeli organization which is focused on treating at-risk youth through outdoor activities. This year, the Maytiv Center was chosen to guide the annual conference of Lotan's Way, and to focus on working through challenge and adventure using a therapeutic perspective of positive psychology. The conference dealt with the conceptualization and implementation of positive psychology field interventions and challenges. Therapists, group leaders, field guides, social activists and representatives of other frameworks for at-risk youth anticipated.

Therapy through challenge and adventure focuses on identifying and enhancing strengths and abilities, and on strengthening self-esteem through the experience of success. The youth that participate in the challenge and adventure activities learn that they have the power to influence the course of their lives, and that every event that they experience is the result of a choice they made themselves. These elements, which are commonplace in the language of adventure therapy, are the conceptual focus of positive psychology, which examines aspects of psychological resources, strengths, growth and fulfillment, and understanding the effects of happiness, self-esteem, empathy, friendship, goal setting, love, creativity and awareness.



Completion of the Tzameret Program for Outstanding School Principals (within the Avney Rosh Institute)

The Tzameret Program for growth, development and learning for outstanding school principals is a joint initiative of Avney Rosh and the Lautman Foundation. The program takes place once a year and aims to help school principals deal with complex challenges in the field of school management. This year, the Maytiv Center was selected to bring the Tzameret Program to 25 principals of leading schools. The program was based on learning, experience, and the provision of practical tools to lead to change in schools, and to strengthen the optimal functioning of the human resources (the teachers and the students) of schools. The 30 hour process was based on a combination of the core components of positive psychology for school management, including increasing happiness, positive emotions, gratitude and appreciation, setting goals and aims in life, strengthening the link between body and soul, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and the creating a positive working environment . According to one anticipate: "The process was fascinating and brought new things to my attention. I experienced personal and professional changes. I benefitted from the intervention as a family woman, as a professional, and as a person".

Calendar Updates and Activities of the Maytiv Center

- **12/03/12-** Lecture to principals of the WIZO educational institutes. The lecture is titled: "The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts: Positive Psychology within Educational Frameworks."
- **15/03/12-** Lecture to Garin Tzabar at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. Garin Tzabar, which is sponsored by the Tzofim (the Israeli Scouts), is a unique project which was launched in 1991. The members of Garin Tzabar are Jewish teenagers aged 18 to 23 who live abroad and choose to move to Israel to join the army and to complete a full military service.
- **19/03/12-** The opening of the Intervention Program in the S.H.R. (Sherutei Hinuch VeRevacha— Education and Welfare Services) branch of the Ministry of Education, for administrators of different regions. The program is 30 hours long.

The Maytiv website has been updated with a comprehensive database of positive psychology research. The database can be used to learn about topics such as human strengths, goal setting, gratitude, the mind-body connection and more, all in the spirit of positive psychology. The website's URL is: www.maytiv.co.il.

