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Other People Matter

What you think will bring you happiness and what will actually bring you happiness are likely two vastly different things.

Drawing on personal experiences and stories shared on the podcast, at Ready24, Emily and Ryan unpacked what positive psychology is all about, while sharing tangible actions you could take to shift your perspective to inject more optimism and happiness into your life and the lives of those around you, based on the overarching principle that Other People Matter.

What is positive psychology?

- The scientific study of what makes life worth living
- Includes experiences of flourishing, vitality, optimism, the state of flow
- The study of positive emotion, i.e., joy, happiness, gratitude, contentment, love
- It is not about being positive or forcing positivity

What does “other people matter” mean?

The late Professor Christopher Peterson states positive psychology and the “pursuit of the good life” can be summed up in three words. Other people matter. He suggests that anything that builds and fosters connection with others is what makes life worth living.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development, the longest running study of human health and wellbeing provides irrefutable evidence.

The study followed the lives of over 700 men since 1938. The results from the study were simple. It is not success, wealth or fame that make us happy. It is our relationships. Good relationships are what make life worth living. They buffer us against stress, provide us with meaning and purpose and help us to stay healthy.

Yet, so often (and very naturally) we confuse the pursuit of happiness with the striving for achievement and monetary success. We focus on the next thing. The next goal to attain. But at what cost? The cost is often feelings of stress, burnout, emptiness, dissatisfaction and disconnection.

What can we do?

- Pay attention to your relationships.
- How do you show up to the people who are important to you?
- How do you express care?
- Think about your “why” – why am I doing this? What purpose is this job/role serving?
- Take a moment to check in with what my values are? Why am I on this planet? Is my behavior in line with what I value?
- Pay attention to the importance of celebrating those around you.
- Show up to the successes of others around you / in your team.
- Think about how you contribute to the lives around you. Don’t underestimate how much you matter to others. Equally let others know how important they are to you.
- Consider your own self care. It is not about going above and beyond but being present, engaged and connected with those who are important to you.

Additional references:

Waldinger, R., Schulz, M (2023). The Good Life: Lessons from the World’s Longest Study on Happiness. Random House, UK.

