



The Why and How of Thriving Conference: Thriving Cheat Sheet

Foundational Terms

Thriving: is the product of the pursuit and engagement of an **authentic life** that brings inner joy and happiness through meeting goals, being connected with life passions and people, and relishing in accomplishments through the peaks and valleys of life.”¹

Jewish Education That Leads to Thriving: Jewish education that leads to thriving draws from mainstream scientific research and Jewish wisdom to allow learners to live a more meaningful, develop relationship-driven, and responsible life. Jewish Education that leads to thriving gives Jews the capacity to be the best possible versions of themselves and ensures that the learner is at the center of their own growth and learning. Thriving provides Jews with the tools to help bring about a more equitable and just world, and the tools to grapple with what does God ask from me? (The Jewish Education Project)

Positive Psychology: “the scientific study of what makes life worth living”² this approach emphasizes strengths instead of weakness, building the good in life instead of repairing the bad, and taking the lives of average people up to “great” instead of focusing solely on moving those who are struggling up to normal.³

PERMA Model: (influential model in positive psychology) Seligman proposed this model to help explain and define well-being in greater depth. “PERMA” is an acronym for the five facets of well-being.

P-Positive Emotions: even though seeking positive emotions alone is not a very effective way to boost your well-being, experiencing positive emotion is still an important factor. Part of well-being is enjoying yourself in the moment, i.e., experiencing positive emotions.

E-Engagement: Having sense of engagement in which we may lose track of time and become completely absorbed in something we enjoy and excel at, is an important piece of well-being.

R-Relationships: Humans are social creatures, and we rely on connections with others to truly flourish. Having deep, meaningful, relationships is vital to our well-being.

M-Meaning: Even someone who is deliriously happy most of the time may not have a developed sense of well-being if they do not find meaning in their life. When we dedicate ourselves to a cause or recognize something bigger than ourselves, we experience a sense of meaning that there is simply no replacement for.

A-Accomplishment: We all thrive when we are succeeding, achieving our goals, and bettering ourselves. Without a drive to accomplish and achieve, we are missing one of the puzzle pieces of authentic well-being.⁴

¹ Soots, Lynn. “Flourishing” The Positive Psychology People, <http://www.thepositivepsychologypeople.com/flourishing/>

² Peterson, Christopher. “Meaning and Positive Psychology.” *International Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy Volume 5 issue 1*, <file:///C:/Users/jgoldberg/Downloads/196-13-389-2-10-20171212.pdf>

³ Ackerman, Courtney. “What is Positive Psychology and Why is it important?” *Positive Psychology Program*, <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-psychology-definition/>

⁴ Ackerman, Courtney. “What is Positive Psychology and Why is it important?” *Positive Psychology Program*, <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-psychology-definition/>





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Additional Terms

Flow: A psychological state that accompanies highly engaging activities. State of intense absorption or feeling “in the zone.” Feeling of energized focused, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.⁵

Six Factors That Characterize an Experience of Flow:

1. Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
2. The merging of action and awareness, or being fully present in your actions
3. A loss of reflective and self-conscious (lack of attention of self)
4. A sense of personal control or agency to the situation
5. A distorted sense of time passing
6. Experiencing the activity or situation as intrinsically rewarding⁶

Growth Mindset: is the belief that intelligence can be developed. Students with a growth mindset understand they can get smarter through hard work, the use of effective strategies, and help from others when needed. It is contrasted with a fixed mindset: the belief that intelligence is a fixed trait that is set in stone at birth.⁷

Mussar: A treasury of techniques, teachings, and contemplative practices that offers immensely valuable guidance for the journey of our lives. The goal of Mussar practice is to release the light of holiness that lives within the soul. Mussar evolved over the past 1,000 years as a Jewish tradition to help individuals understand and transform their inner lives. Mussar includes meditations, guided contemplations, exercises, and chants that are all intended to penetrate down to the darkness of the subconscious, to bring about change right at the root of our nature.⁸

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.⁹

VIA Character Strengths (Values in Action): is a scientific classification of 24-character strengths. Every individual possesses all 24-character strengths in different degrees, giving each person a unique character profile. The 24-character strengths are common to almost every culture across the world.¹⁰

⁵ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990.) Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience. New York: Harper Row.

⁶ Ackerman, Courtney. “What is Positive Psychology and Why is it important?” Positive Psychology Program, <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-psychology-definition/>

⁷ Romero, Carissa. “What we know about Growth Mindset.” Mindset Scholars Network., <http://mindsetscholarsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/What-We-Know-About-Growth-Mindset.pdf>

⁸ “What is Mussar?” The Mussar Institute, <https://mussarinstitute.org/what-is-mussar-2/>

⁹ “What is SEL?” Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

¹⁰ “The VIA Classification of Strengths.” *The VIA Institute on Character*, <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths>

