

Assignment 7

MAS S63 Tools for Wellbeing

Due 9pm Thursday 10/16. Do not forget to include your name and email address in your submission.

Please follow the the following name convention to name your files:

<FirstNameLastName-Assignment7>. For example JohnDoe-Assignment7.pdf.

You should upload your file here: <http://bit.ly/1xtIrl5>

1 READ

1. Hershfield, Hal E., et al. "**When Feeling Bad Can Be Good: Mixed Emotions Benefit Physical Health Across Adulthood.**" *Social psychological and personality science* 4.1 (2013): 54-61.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3768126/pdf/nihms503989.pdf>
2. National Institute of Mental Health, "**What is Depression?**"
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/index.shtml>

2 EXERCISE 1

This exercise has been adapted from Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being.

Close your eyes. Call up the face of someone still alive who years ago did something or said something that changed your life for the better. Someone who you never properly thanked; someone you could meet face-to-face next week. Got a face?

Gratitude can make your life happier and more satisfying. When we feel gratitude, we benefit from the pleasant memory of a positive event in our life. Also, when we express our gratitude to others, we strengthen our relationship with them. But sometimes our thank you is said so

casually or quickly that it is nearly meaningless. In this exercise, you will have the opportunity to experience what it is like to express your gratitude in a thoughtful, purposeful manner.

Your task is to write a letter of gratitude to this individual and deliver it in person. The letter should be concrete and be no more than three hundred words: be specific about what they did for you and how it affected your life. Let them know what you are doing now, and mention how you often remember what they did. Make it sing! Once you have written the testimonial, call the person and tell them you'd like to visit them, but be vague about the purpose of the meeting; this exercise is much more fun when it is a surprise. When you meet them, take your time reading your letter.

Have this lucky person send an email to mass63-assignments@media.mit.edu (and carbon-copy you) confirming that you did this, and a one line sentence on what it meant to them by the last day of classes for this semester. If you are a new student here, you may also do this virtually over Skype or Google Hangout.

3 EXERCISE 2

In all your answers please show respect for privacy, while giving real-world examples. For example you can tell us that "I" may or may not refer to you, or use a pseudonym for the actor. (You can also be frank or open with us; however, we don't want anybody to feel pressure to tell the staff things that are personal).

Reflect on the distinction between negative affect that can be a transient part of mixed-emotions and depression. Support your answers through references.

1. What are the main differences between the two? Comment on why becoming personally aware of depression can be challenging.
2. Imagine a) a colleague, b) a friend and c) a loved one who might be showing signs of depression. What would you do in all three cases beyond referring them to mental health counseling?

4 PROJECT UPDATE

Write a one paragraph update on your class project. What did you contribute to the project and what are the next steps? We also want to know if you will need COUHES applications - if yes, we will work with you right away so that you meet the COUHES calendar deadlines.