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"Flourish" by Martin Seligman, a Review

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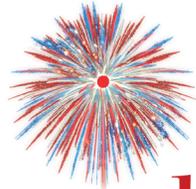
"Flourish" by Martin Seligman, a Review

Cover Page Footnote

Seligman Martin. *Flourish* (Simon and Schuster, 2011), 53.

"A compelling view of a positive human future, for individuals, corporations, and nations, brilliantly told." —Tony Hsieh, author of *Delivering Happiness* and CEO of Zappos.com, Inc.

A Visionary New Understanding
of Happiness and Well-being



Flourish

MARTIN E.P.
SELIGMAN

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

Flourish

By Martin Seligman

Book Review by Sarah J. Cummings

Flourish begins with Martin Seligman explaining what flourishing is, and how his view of happiness has been rethought and rewritten over the years. Before writing and publishing this book, Seligman wrote *Authentic Happiness* which offers a different perspective and takes on the importance of emotional well-being. *Flourish* clarifies his argument and reworks his theory.

Seligman stated: "If we want to flourish and if we want to have well-being, we must indeed minimize our misery; but in addition, we must have positive emotion, meaning, accomplishment, and positive relationships" (p. 53). This definition differs from his previous thoughts and writing on authentic happiness. Happiness and well-being are simply attained with positivity, purpose, and accomplishment, and if we are engaged and invested in positive relationships. Throughout the book, Seligman explains these elements and reinforces it with evidence.

There were three specific elements that stood out to me clearly: 1) the need for active and constructive responding, 2) the use of strengths to flourish, and 3) the relationships between positive psychology and disease. There are four ways in which we can respond to people: active and constructive, passive and constructive, active and destructive, and passive and destructive. As I read through this psychological chart of responses, I understood more clearly the changes I could make in my own life. I have decided to be more of a builder in my conversations by being an active and constructive responder. Responding better creates a more positive environment in which I know I can flourish better.

We all have strengths. As I read this book, I was able to take the assessment on what my personal strengths are. To list a few examples, spirituality, humor, self-regulation, social intelligence, and honesty each qualify as strengths for an individual. This book encourages people to discover their strengths and apply them both at work and in other circumstances that require you to flourish.

Toward the end of the book, the topic of disease is addressed and how optimism and pessimism relate to illness. Cardiovascular disease (among others) was explained in terms of how being a more optimistic person could be a preventative measure for disease and a predictor for wellness.

Flourishing is an interesting topic to read about, and something I would like to be better at in my workplace, in relationships, and in other areas of my life. This book has given me a new perspective on what positive psychology is, how to better respond to people, how to use my strengths, and especially, how to be more optimistic in my life so I can truly flourish. 🏳️‍🌈