POSITIVE

ORGANIZATIONAL

SCHOLARSHIP

Foundations of a New Discipline

Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn, Editors

An Excerpt From

Positive Organizational Scholarship:
Foundations of a New Discipline

by Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn, Editors
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers
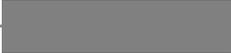
Contents

Foundations of Positive Organizational Scholarship

Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn

Imagine a world in which almost all organizations are typified by greed, selfishness, manipulation, secrecy, and a single-minded focus on winning. Wealth creation is the key indicator of success. Imagine that members of such organizations are characterized by distrust, anxiety, self-absorption, fear, burnout, and feelings of abuse. Conflict, lawsuits, contract breaking, retribution, and disrespect characterize many interactions and social relationships. Imagine also that scholarly researchers investigating these organizations emphasize theories of problem solving, reciprocity and justice, managing uncertainty, overcoming resistance, achieving profitability, and competing successfully against others.

For the sake of contrast, now imagine another world in which almost all organizations are typified by appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality, and meaningfulness. Creating abundance and human well-being are key indicators of success. Imagine that members of such organizations are characterized by trustworthiness, resilience, wisdom, humility, and high levels of positive energy. Social relationships and interactions are characterized by compassion, loyalty, honesty, respect, and forgiveness. Significant attention is given to what makes life worth living. Imagine that scholarly researchers emphasize theories of excellence, transcendence, positive deviance, extraordinary performance, and positive spirals of flourishing.

Positive organizational scholarship (POS) does not reject the value and significance of the phenomena in the first worldview. Rather, it emphasizes the phenomena represented in the second worldview. A focus on competition and profitability in the first worldview, for example, is crucial for understanding organizational survival and success. The second worldview merely calls attention to phenomena that represent positive deviance—phenomena that have received limited scholarly attention in organizational studies. Most organizational theories and empirical research have heretofore adopted assumptions and variables that are more typical of the first worldview than the second.

THE DOMAIN OF POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

POS is concerned primarily with the study of especially positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members. POS does not represent a single theory, but it focuses on dynamics that are typically described by words such as *excellence*, *thriving*, *flourishing*, *abundance*, *resilience*, or *virtuousness*. POS represents an expanded perspective that includes instrumental concerns but puts an increased emphasis on ideas of "goodness" and positive human potential. It encompasses attention to *the enablers* (e.g., processes, capabilities, structures, methods), *the motivations* (e.g., unselfishness, altruism, contribution without regard to self), and *the outcomes or effects* (e.g., vitality, meaningfulness, exhilaration, high-quality relationships) associated with positive phenomena. POS is distinguished from traditional organizational studies in that it seeks to understand what represents and approaches the best of the human condition. In seeking to understand such phenomena, POS has a number of biases. These biases can be considered in terms of each of the three concepts in the label *positive organizational scholarship*.

Positive

POS seeks to understand positive states—such as resilience (see Chapter 7 by Sutcliffe and Vogus) or meaningfulness (see Chapter 20 by Pratt and Ashforth)—as well as the dynamics and outcomes associated with those states—such as gratitude (see Chapter 6 by Emmons) and positive connections (see Chapter 17 by Dutton and Heaphy). This does not mean that traditional organizational studies could be accused of focusing on "negative" or undesirable states, only that especially positive states, dynamics, and outcomes usually receive less attention in traditional organizational studies. POS also encompasses the study of systems in equilibrium, but it is espe-

cially interested in the nonlinear positive dynamics (what several authors in this volume refer to as "positive spirals"; see Chapter 11 by Fredrickson) that are frequently associated with positive organizational phenomena. POS encompasses the examination of typical patterns of behavior and exchange, but it also tends to emphasize the realization of potential patterns of excellence, especially positive deviance from expected patterns (see Chapter 14 by Spreitzer and Sonenshein). It takes classic questions such as those of organizational leadership and design and uncovers new understanding by examining positive processes that create these patterns (see Chapter 16 by Luthans and Avolio and Chapter 18 by Gittell). Whereas POS does not reject the examination of dysfunctions, or dynamics that disable or produce harm (see Chapter 5 by Weick), it does tend to emphasize the examination of factors that enable positive consequences for individuals, groups, and organizations (see Chapter 12 by Bagozzi). "Positive," in other words, represents an affirmative bias and orientation, not a substitute for other more common organizational phenomena. More often than not, POS focuses on phenomena that are displayed "not in accordance with the situation broadly construed" (see Chapter 3 by Park and Peterson), or, in other words, phenomena that are unexpectedly positive. The interest is in exceptional, virtuous, life-giving, and flourishing phenomena.

Organizational

POS focuses on positive processes and states that occur in association with organizational contexts. It examines positive phenomena within organizations as well as positive organizational contexts themselves. POS draws from the full spectrum of organizational theories to understand, explain, and predict the occurrence, causes, and consequences of positivity. POS expands the boundaries of these theories to make visible positive states, positive processes, and positive relationships that are typically ignored within organizational studies. For example, POS spotlights how the virtuousness of organizations is associated with financial performance in the context of downsizing, in contrast to a more typical focus on how organizations try to mitigate the harmful effects of downsizing (see Chapter 4 by Cameron); or, how organizational practices enable individuals to craft meaningful work through fostering individual "callings," in contrast to a more typical focus on employee productivity or morale (see Chapter 19 by Wrzesniewski); or, how the cascading dynamics of empowerment create broader inclusion of stakeholders in public organizations, in contrast to a focus on the political dynamics of stakeholder demands (see Chapter 22 by Feldman and Khademian); or, how building on strengths produces more positive outcomes in a diverse array of settings such as classroom learning, employee

commitment, leadership development, and firm profitability, in contrast to a more typical focus on managing or overcoming weaknesses (see Chapter 8 by Clifton and Harter). As this sampling of studies implies, a POS lens exposes new or different mechanisms through which positive organizational dynamics and positive organizational processes produce extraordinarily positive or unexpected outcomes. At the same time, POS purposely illuminates how contexts and processes, and their interactions, are related to positive states in individuals, groups, and organizations.

Scholarship

There is no lack of self-help accounts that prescribe relatively simple and uncomplicated prescriptions for achieving happiness, fulfillment, or effectiveness. What is lacking in most of these contributions, however, is empirical credibility and theoretical explanations for how and why the prescriptions work. Further, these more prescriptive accounts do not speak to the contingencies regarding when the directives will produce the desired results and when they won't. Having a foundation in the scientific method is the basis upon which most concepts, relationships, and prescriptions develop staying power. POS does not stand in opposition to the array of self-help publications—many of which recount positive dynamics and outcomes—but it extends beyond them in its desire to develop rigorous, systematic, and theory-based foundations for positive phenomena. POS requires careful definitions of terms, a rationale for prescriptions and recommendations, consistency with scientific procedures in drawing conclusions, and grounding in previous related work. An interest in POS implies a commitment to the full spectrum of activities involved in scholarship. Whereas this book is intended to address an audience of organizational researchers, the success and sustainability of this field requires balanced attention to research, teaching, and practice as three important elements of scholarly endeavor. A bias of POS is to develop theory and research in service of teaching and practice. POS is biased toward appreciating how each of these elements of the scholarly endeavor contributes to the vitality of the others.

SOME CORRELATES OF POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

An emphasis on positive phenomena is not unique in the social sciences, of course. Other traditions have also examined positive dynamics. In fact, POS has gained particular momentum from literatures in several other fields. Two—positive psychology in Chapter 2 by Peterson and Seligman, and appreciative inquiry in Chapter 15 by Cooperrider and Sekerka—are particu-

larly well described in this volume. Other traditions with a focus on positive phenomena include community psychology, humanistic organizational behavior, organizational development, prosocial motivation and citizenship behavior, and corporate social responsibility.

Positive Psychology

In 1998 the president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, initiated a new emphasis in the field of psychology, referred to as *positive psychology*. Seligman argued that since World War II, traditional psychology has focused almost exclusively on human pathology, or on what is wrong with and lacking in individuals. This brand of psychology developed the assumption that human beings are inherently fragile and flawed. On the one hand, clinical psychology has made considerable progress in finding strategies of treatment and in moving people from psychological illness toward health. On the other hand, the field has created a deficit bias. It produced a set of theories and practices that described and explained remedies for specific human problems. In contrast, the development of positive psychology was not meant to replace the existing field but to supplement it. Its focus is on strengths and on building the best in life. The basic assumption is that goodness and excellence are not illusions but are authentic states and modes of being that can be analyzed and achieved. Positive psychology has three points of focus: *positive experiences* such as happiness, pleasure, joy, and fulfillment; *positive individual traits* such as character, talents, and interests; and *positive institutions* such as families, schools, business, communities, and societies. This growing literature has begun to capture the attention of both scholars and the media (Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Seligman, 2002).

Community Psychology

Historically, community psychology has had an emphasis on the prevention of illness and on wellness enhancement. Jahoda's treatment of positive mental health was one of the first attempts to "express dissatisfaction with a primary focus on sick behavior" (1958: ix) and to emphasize illness prevention and wellness. She identified six domains of prevention-based community psychology: positive self-attitudes, wholesome growth and development, personal integration, autonomy, accurate perception of reality, and mastery of one's environment. Other writers in community psychology, notably Cowen (1973, 1977, 1980, 1986, 1994, 1999), also discussed principles and practices associated with prevention of mental illness. Community-based prevention and wellness enhancement programs

have been studied and described in that literature, as illustrated by Durlak and Wells's summary (1997) of 177 studies of prevention and wellness and their positive outcomes. Unfortunately, little dissemination of those findings has occurred in the more general field of psychology or in organizational studies.

Organizational Development and Appreciative Inquiry

Organizational development (OD) was founded on a set of techniques and strategies for changing, developing, and enhancing the functioning of organizations—especially the internal human features of the organization. In OD, a recent movement has emerged that focuses directly on "searching for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them . . . [it] involves in a central way the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000: 5). Chapter 15 in this volume describes the foundation of this movement—called *appreciative inquiry*—which has recently received a substantial amount of attention among consultants and change agents (Srivastava & Cooperrider, 1999; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000). Appreciative inquiry refers to a composite of change practices based on the assumption that organizations have a positive core that, if revealed and tapped, unleashes positive energy and positive improvement. The change process proceeds by identifying past examples of peak performance, spectacular successes, or positive aspirations for the future. Key explanatory elements are identified that account for these past successes, and a vision of the future is crafted based on what was extraordinarily successful and what can be perpetuated in the future. The success and popularity of this approach to organizational development have advanced at a more rapid pace than the articulation of the theory for why it works, so the scholarly opportunities for POS researchers to examine and comprehend the underlying dynamics of appreciative inquiry are abundant.

Prosocial and Citizenship Behavior

An increasing amount of attention has also been given to prosocial behavior at work, sometimes called "citizenship behavior," which refers to helping behaviors designed to provide assistance or benefit to others (Organ, 1988; George, 1991; Batson, 1994). These types of behaviors exceed role requirements and are pursued in spite of not being associated with a formal organizational reward (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002). Examples

range from providing assistance to customers or coworkers in a work setting to volunteer or philanthropic activity outside of work. In all cases, prosocial and citizenship behavior refers to voluntary actions that provide benefit to other people. Related literature has appeared on topics such as rescuing Jews in Nazi Europe, fundraising, assisting starving refugees, saving whales and endangered species, assisting third world countries, donating organs, enhancing group welfare, and so on (Batson, 1994; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). An ongoing debate in psychology centers on whether or not prosocial behavior is really just a selfish act designed to satisfy a personal, egotistical need, or whether empathy and altruism are the chief motivators of prosocial behavior. A variety of experiments have been performed to test the nature of prosocial motivation (Batson, 1991), but the debate continues.

Corporate Social Responsibility

An increasing literature on corporate social responsibility centers on the obligation of organizations, especially corporations, to address societal problems and ills (Margolis & Walsh, 2002; Whetten, Rands, & Godfrey, 2001). All three branches of the U.S. government have urged corporations to become involved in promoting social welfare—from contributing to the global AIDS fund to establishing minimum wage standards. A large number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have also been established to address social problems and to pressure corporations to join them in taking responsibility for addressing human suffering. Various academic disciplines have long been interested in social welfare, social justice, and human rights (e.g., accounting, economics, strategy, and organizational behavior), and most of this scholarly work has focused on the relationship between corporate social performance (i.e., involvement in socially responsible activities) and financial performance. In an extensive review of the literature, Margolis and Walsh (2002) reported that 53 percent of the studies pointed to a positive relationship between corporate social performance and financial performance when the latter was treated as the dependent variable. Two-thirds (68 percent) of the studies that treated financial performance as an independent variable found a positive relationship with corporate social performance.

The point of our brief discussion of these related scholarly traditions is to acknowledge that the emphasis on positive phenomena is neither unique nor new. Much scholarly work has been done in other arenas. On the other hand, too little of that work has found its way into organizational studies, and with the exception of positive psychology and appreciative inquiry, much of that work remains focused on overcoming ills, problems, and diffi-

culties rather than on flourishing, on extraordinarily positive dynamics, or on the best of the human condition. POS as a field of study seeks to capitalize on these related scholarly traditions, but POS also represents an extension of what is known to date about generative and life-giving phenomena in organizations.

ADVANTAGES OF A POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PERSPECTIVE

POS is a fresh lens. It offers new ways of looking at old phenomena. By applying this new lens, elements that were formerly invisible become visible. POS helps people look at phenomena in new ways. For example, POS can help traditional network and social capital research uncover energizing and generative relationships (see Chapter 21 by Baker, Cross, and Wooten); typical work on adaptation can uncover new patterns of replenishment and resilience (see Chapter 7 by Sutcliffe and Vogus); typical work on information exchange and learning can uncover new pathways for knowledge creation (see Chapter 13 by Lee, Caza, Edmondson, and Thomke); typical work on motivation can uncover unexpected and transcendent motivational dynamics (see Chapter 9 by Bateman and Porath); and typical work on problem solving and deficit gaps can uncover abundance gaps (see Chapter 15 by Cooperrider and Sekerka).

To repeat, POS is not value-neutral. It advocates the position that the desire to improve the human condition is universal and that the capacity to do so is latent in most systems. The means by which this latent capacity is unleashed and organized, the extent to which human possibilities are enabled, and the extent to which systems produce extraordinarily positive outcomes are of special interest. POS does not exclude phenomena that are typically labeled "positive" in organizational studies—such as organizational improvement, goal achievement, or making a profit—but it has a bias toward life-giving, generative, and ennobling human conditions.

In other words, POS seeks to be a generative lens for linking theories in organizational studies. As an example, POS can uncover new sources and forms of capabilities that build on human relationships. By focusing on the generative dynamics of human organizing, POS provides an expanded view of how organizations can create sustained competitive advantage. By unlocking capacities for elements such as meaning creation, relationship transformation, positive emotion cultivation, and high-quality connections, organizations can produce sustained sources of collective capability that help organizations thrive. POS offers a unique conceptual foundation for understanding how and why organizational strategies have their effects on

human behavior in the workplace, and why some strategies and dynamic capabilities may be more generative than others.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Our purpose in this volume is to provide groundwork for a new emphasis on positive organizational phenomena. The intent is to make positive phenomena available for systematic and rigorous investigation by organizational scholars. We are mindful of Cowen and Kilmer's observation (2002) that the social sciences are filled with faddish concepts and perspectives that have lost credibility and relevance because people accepted too quickly an alluring concept that was not conceptually defined and rigorously investigated. Such concepts receive short-lived attention, spinning off in disconnected directions and never generating cumulative findings or theories. "Even though there may be good agreement about the pristine beauty and promise of the new concept as an abstraction, people may diverge substantially in how, concretely, its operations are best understood and implemented" (p. 450). The intent of each chapter in this volume is to invite organizational scholars to build upon and extend the positive organizational phenomena being examined. These chapters each provide definitional, theoretical, and/or empirical foundations for what we anticipate will become a cumulative body of enduring work.

We have organized the chapters into three parts. These parts are an arbitrary way to capture some basic themes in POS phenomena. Part 1—"Virtuous Processes, Strengths, and Positive Organizing"—contains chapters on virtues and strengths in individuals and organizations that are associated with positive outcomes. Chapters also discuss extraordinarily positive organizing processes. Part 2—"Upward Spirals and Positive Change"—identifies the generative dynamics associated with self-reinforcing, positive spirals in organizations. The effects of positive emotions, inquiry, and leadership on individuals and organizations are examined. Part 3—"Positive Meanings and Positive Connections"—contains chapters focusing on positive human relationships and the positive meaning of, and in, work that are associated with human flourishing and positive dynamics in organizations. Each of these parts contains chapters that ground a specific concept or phenomenon in scholarly literature, identify its relationship to positive organizational scholarship, and guide further scholarly work with suggested research questions and additional areas of needed study. The chapters are intended to be invitations to further work by providing a foundation upon which scholarship can expand.

In Part 1, Park and Peterson in Chapter 3 provide an overview of the ex-

tensive work being done to classify strengths and virtues in the field of positive psychology. The chapter focuses specifically on six widely shared organizational virtues that help produce the good society, the good workplace, and the good school. Chapter 4 by Cameron introduces the concept of organizational virtuousness and examines its relationship to several measures of organizational performance. The results demonstrate that organizations scoring high in virtuousness have higher levels of performance, especially after downsizing. Weick's Chapter 5 examines the dynamics of tragic and traumatic events, and it highlights how a POS perspective helps explain the absence of "a million accidents waiting to happen." Chapter 6 by Emmons introduces the concept of gratitude and identifies the importance of this phenomenon in organizational settings. Research is reviewed that establishes relationships between feelings and expressions of gratitude and desirable individual and organizational outcomes. Chapter 7 by Sutcliffe and Vogus highlights resilience as a key attribute of flourishing organizations. They identify predictors, dimensions, contributors, and effects of resilience in organizations, groups, and individuals. Chapter 8 by Clifton and Harter reviews a variety of empirical studies that support the proposition that building strengths is the most efficient focus for individual and organizational improvement efforts. The authors point out that individuals and organizations gain more when they build on their strengths than when they make comparable efforts in overcoming weaknesses. In Chapter 9, Bateman and Porath introduce the concept of transcendent motivation. Transcendent motivation is that which surpasses environment or personal constraints and creates positive change in the person or the environment. Conceptual and empirical dimensions of the construct are developed. Chapter 10 by Worline and Quinn focuses on the virtue of courageous principled action in fostering innovation and vitality in the four major organizational forms and structures.

Part 2 focuses on upward spirals, or the dynamics of escalating positive phenomena in organizations. In Chapter 11, Fredrickson focuses on positive emotions in organizations. Based on her broaden-and-build theory, she explains how positive emotions can transform individuals and organizations and move them in upward spirals to higher levels of performance. In Chapter 12, Bagozzi focuses on the dynamics of emotions, mapping how such emotions give rise to both negative and positive outcomes in organizations. In Chapter 13, Lee, Caza, Edmondson, and Thomke focus on attributes of organization members and the processes of knowledge creation. They show how knowledge-creating processes give rise to self-reinforcing or upward dynamics. In Chapter 14, Spreitzer and Sonenshein discuss the concept of positive deviance, or the manifestation of extreme positive behaviors in organizations, and they provide a research agenda for further

examining the dynamics involved. In Chapter 15, Cooperrider and Sekerka provide a review of the literature on appreciative inquiry (AI) and present a new model of AI that explains the understructure of the process for unleashing potential in organizations. Luthans and Avolio craft Chapter 16 by drawing from their respective past efforts on leadership. They define what is meant by authentic leadership and offer a theoretically driven model for developing authentic leaders.

Part 3 contains chapters focusing on relationships, positive connections, and meaningfulness. In Chapter 17, Dutton and Heaphy introduce the concept of high-quality connections and develop four mechanisms through which high-quality connections enable individuals to thrive. In Chapter 18, Gittell uses the idea of high-quality connections to build a new perspective on the positive dynamics of coordination mechanisms in organizations. Chapters 19 by Wrzesniewski and 20 by Pratt and Ashforth focus on the positive meanings created at work and their impact on individuals and organizations. Wrzesniewski focuses on the powerful effects of work orientations referred to as "callings" and how individuals can craft their work to make it more meaningful. Pratt and Ashforth use core concepts of identity to build a theory of how organizational contexts foster meaningfulness both in working and at work. They examine how contexts enrich memberships, tasks, and roles. Chapter 21 by Baker, Cross, and Wooten introduces ideas of positive energy as means for explaining positive dynamics of connection. More specifically, the authors develop a new perspective they call "positive network analysis" that explains how the positive energy created in positive ties delivers extraordinary results. They begin to unpack the mechanisms that contribute to these effects. Last, but definitely not least, Feldman and Khademian in Chapter 22 take on the dynamics of inclusion and empowerment in a public management context. Their model of cascading inclusion shows how empowerment on the "inside" of an organization creates democracy and participation for stakeholders on the "outside."

Taken as a whole, these chapters represent only a sampling of key POS phenomena, of course, but they do begin to create a foundation upon which additional scholarly work can build. Their intent is to provide empirical, theoretical, and logical arguments so that a science of positive organizational dynamics can flourish.

Positive Organizational Studies: Lessons from Positive Psychology

Christopher M. Peterson and
Martin E. P. Seligman

The field of positive psychology was christened in 1998 as one of the initiatives of Martin Seligman in his role as president of the American Psychological Association (APA) (Seligman, 1998b, 1999). The trigger for positive psychology was the premise that psychology since World War II has focused much of its efforts on human problems and how to remedy them. In the immediate aftermath of the war, clinical psychology took form as a profession; the APA became involved in accrediting clinical psychology programs and in lobbying state governments to enact licensing laws; the Veterans Administration created training opportunities in the form of clinical psychology internships; and the National Institute of Mental Health made available to researchers many millions of dollars in grant support for investigations not of mental health but of mental illness (Reisman, 1991). Psychology joined forces with psychiatry to create the scientific field of what could go wrong with people.

The yield of this focus on pathology has been considerable. Unprecedented strides have been made in understanding, treating, and preventing psychological disorders. Widely accepted classification manuals—the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association (1994) and the *International Classification*

of Diseases (ICD) sponsored by the World Health Organization (1990)—allow disorders to be described and have given rise to a family of reliable assessment strategies. There now exist effective treatments, psychological and pharmacological, for more than a dozen disorders that in the recent past were frighteningly intractable (Nathan & Gorman, 1998; Seligman, 1994). Lagging behind but still impressive in their early success are ongoing efforts to devise interventions that prevent disorders from occurring in the first place (e.g., Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 1999).

But there has been a cost to this emphasis. Scientific psychology has neglected the study of what can go right with people and often has little more to say about the good life than do pop psychologists, inspirational speakers, and armchair gurus. More subtly, the underlying assumptions of psychology have shifted to embrace a disease model of human nature. Human beings are seen as flawed and fragile, casualties of cruel environments or bad genetics, and if not in denial then at best in recovery. This worldview has crept into the common culture of the United States. We have become a nation of self-identified victims, and our heroes and heroines are called survivors and nothing more.

Not only has the good life been neglected, but it has frequently been denied by psychologists, starting with those taking their lead from Freud. Anything positive about people became suspect, presumably the result of unconscious defenses that disguise our real motives—sex and aggression. Even psychologists who would not consider themselves Freudians have participated in this debunking of the good life. Hope and optimism have been dismissed as wishful thinking if not outright delusions. Ostensible altruism has been viewed as just another strategy for personal gain. Courage has been reinterpreted as deficiencies in those parts of the nervous system responsible for fear.

Positive psychology proposes that it is time to correct this imbalance and to challenge the pervasive assumptions of the disease model. Positive psychology calls for as much focus on strength as on weakness, as much interest in building the best things in life as in repairing the worst, and as much attention to fulfilling the lives of healthy people as to healing the wounds of the distressed (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikzentmihalyi, 2000). The concern of psychology with human problems is of course understandable. It will not and should not be abandoned; people experience difficulties that demand and deserve scientifically informed solutions.

Positive psychologists are "merely" saying that the psychology of the past sixty years is incomplete. But as simple as this proposal sounds, it demands a sea change in perspective. Psychologists interested in promoting human potential need to start with different assumptions and to pose different questions from their peers who assume a disease model. The most basic

assumption that positive psychology urges is that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disease, disorder, and distress. We parse the concerns of positive psychology into three related topics: the study of positive subjective experiences (happiness, pleasure, gratification, fulfillment, well-being), the study of positive individual traits (character, talents, interests, values) that enable positive experiences, and the study of positive institutions (families, schools, businesses, communities, societies) that enable positive traits and thereby positive experiences (Seligman, 2002). We are adamant that these topics are not secondary, derivative, illusory, epiphenomenal, or otherwise suspect.

The good news for positive psychology is that our generalizations about business-as-usual psychology over the past sixty years are simply that—generalizations. There are many good examples of psychological research, past and present, that can be claimed as positive psychology. For example, we can point to the trend-bucking work by Csikzentmihalyi (1990) on flow, by Diener (1984) on happiness, by Snyder (1994) on hope, by Scheier and Carver (1985) on dispositional optimism, by developmentalists on resilience and invulnerability among children (e.g., Masten, 2001), by Vaillant (2002) on successful aging, by Fredrickson (1998) on positive emotions, by Keltmer and Haidt (in press) on moral elevation, by Segerstrom, Taylor, Kemeny, and Fahey (1998) on psychological influences on immunocompetence, by Ryff (1989) on psychological well-being, by Gardner (1983) on multiple intelligences, by Baltes and Staudinger (1993) and Sternberg (1998) on wisdom, by the Gallup Organization on workplace strengths (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), by Rokeach (1973) and Schwartz (1994) on values, and by Jamieson (2000) on civic engagement. We can point to the insights offered a generation ago by humanistic psychologists (Taylor, 2001) and by Jahoda (1958) in her prescient treatise on "positive mental health." We can even point immodestly to our own work on optimistic explanatory style (Peterson, 2000; Peterson & Bossio, 1991; Seligman, 1991; Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995) and to our in-progress investigations of character and virtue (Peterson & Park, in press; Peterson & Seligman, 2002).

Positive psychologists do not claim to have invented the good life or even to have ushered in its scientific study. As we see it, the contribution of positive psychology has been to provide an umbrella term for what have been isolated lines of theory and research and to make the self-conscious argument that the good life deserves its own field of inquiry within psychology, at least until that day when all of psychology embraces the study of what is good along with the study of what is bad.

We are therefore heartened that our colleagues in organizational studies have arrived at the same conclusions about the importance of bringing to-

gether under the same rubric different investigations of the "good" organization, as shown by this volume and the December 2001 conference at the University of Michigan School of Business, which ushered in the field of positive organizational scholarship. We applaud Kim Cameron, Jane Dutton, Robert Quinn, and their colleagues and wish to encourage them. We ourselves are not organizational scholars; we are reformed clinicians with expertise in individual psychology. However, over the past few years as positive psychology has taken form, we have learned some lessons about how to regard and nurture a new field that challenges business-as-usual science. We offer these lessons here as a house-warming gift to positive organizational scholars. Welcome to the neighborhood!

META-SCIENTIFIC LESSONS

For convenience, we divide our advice into sections dealing with lessons about cultivating a new field (meta-scientific lessons) versus lessons about conducting research within this new field (scientific lessons). This division notwithstanding, these lessons are interrelated. Any new scientific field—positive psychology or positive organizational scholarship—will rise and fall on the basis of the science that it generates, particular theories and findings created by individual scientists. Indeed, one of our worries about positive psychology is that there will be so many calls for the new direction that the field never begins the journey in earnest. As Thomas Edison said, "Genius is 99 percent perspiration and 1 percent inspiration." We hope that our contribution here provides some inspiration. The sweaty work needs to be done by our readers.

1. Appreciate that positive social science is an easy sell to the general public and a hard sell to the academic community.
Our experience with positive psychology is that everyday people find it exciting and the sort of thing psychology should be doing (cf. Easterbrook, 2001). Despite the pervasiveness of a victim mentality, everyday people seem to know that the elimination or reduction of problems is not all that is involved in improving the human condition. One of the informal experiments that we have devised is to ask prospective parents what it is that they wish for their child-to-be. Answers are invariably phrased in terms of the topics of concern to positive psychology. "I want my child to be happy and healthy." "I want my child to have close friends and a loving family." "I want my child to live in a safe world." "I want my child to pursue a fulfilling career." "I want my child to make a difference in the world." No one has yet said to us that they want their children to avoid *DSM* diagnoses, to

obtain secure jobs in middle management, to have so-so marriages, or to avoid rocking the boat.

In contrast, the academic community is skeptical of positive social science (e.g., Lazarus, in press). Contributing to skepticism are the aforementioned assumptions about human nature as flawed and fragile, notions more widespread and explicit among social scientists than the general public. From this starting point, positive psychology can only be seen as the study of fluff—perhaps even as dangerous fiddling while the world goes to hell. Social scientists are doubtful about the existence of the good life and certainly about the ability of people to report on it with fidelity. We too are mindful of the dangers of self-report but point out that "social desirability" is hardly a nuisance variable when one studies what is socially desirable (cf. Crowne & Marlowe, 1964).

Another stumbling block is the umbrella term itself—*positive psychology*—because many psychologists hear what they have been doing throughout their careers dismissed as negative psychology. This automatic juxtaposition is unfortunate, and positive psychologists intend no insult or disrespect. We prefer the term *business-as-usual psychology* to describe work that focuses on human problems. As we have taken pains to emphasize, business-as-usual psychology is important and necessary and in any event what we have spent most of our own careers pursuing.

Perhaps it is useful to remind our skeptical colleagues that positive social science is still science and cannot have a quarrel with the scientific method. Indeed, we believe that the use of tried-and-true scientific techniques to investigate the good life is what will make positive social science viable. Along these lines, to call someone a positive psychologist is but a shorthand way of saying that he or she studies the topics of concern to the field of positive psychology. It does not mean that the positive psychologist is a "positive" (happy, talented, virtuous) person, and it certainly does not imply that other psychologists are "negative" people. After all, humanistic psychologists may or may not be humane, personality psychologists may or may not display a scintillating personality, and organizational psychologists may or may not be organized.

2. Create an infrastructure to support the field.
For a new field to develop, structures must be put in place that support its activities. Positive psychology has self-consciously done exactly this. The leaders of the field have raised money—interestingly, all financial support to date has come from private foundations and corporations and not one penny from government sources—and then spent this money to create an appropriate niche for positive psychology.

Space does not permit a full description of this infrastructure (see Selig-

man, 1998a), but it includes a steering committee of senior people within positive psychology, yearly conferences devoted to positive psychology, training institutes for advanced graduate students and new assistant professors, special issues of journals (e.g., the January 2000 and March 2001 issues of *American Psychologist;* the Spring 2000 issue of *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology;* the Winter 2001 issue of *Journal of Humanistic Psychology),* edited volumes (e.g., Aspinwall & Staudinger, in press; Chang, 2001; Gillham 2000; Keyes & Haidt, in press), handbooks (e.g., Snyder & Lopez, 2001), seed grants for research, awards, web pages, and e-mail listserves. When interested parties ask for information about positive psychology, we have a wealth of resources to which to refer them, and if they choose to become involved in the field, we can provide the means for their involvement.

3. Identify senior leadership.
Well-placed and active senior leaders are crucial to define a new field so that others will pay attention. Senior leaders not only lay out the territory but also hit the road and give talks, cooperate with the popular media on stories describing positive psychology, and most importantly, facilitate the work of the junior people who will bring the field to its maturity.

Positive psychology is heavy at the top and heavy at the bottom and deliberately thin in between. This distribution of psychologists makes sense because most scholars already established in their careers are not apt to heed the call to do things differently. Younger scholars are still casting about for an intellectual identity and calling; they are the future of positive social science. So, most of the positive psychology prizes have been awarded to researchers early in their careers—some even in high school; seed grants have been channeled to junior people; and travel grants have been given to graduate students to defray the cost of attending conferences and training institutes.

In particular, senior leaders can legitimize positive social science by creating publication outlets for their junior colleagues—the more mainstream, the better. To date, those of us within positive psychology have not actively pursued the creation of a new journal devoted to positive psychology. At some point, such a journal may exist, but our feeling is that the field is not well-served in its infancy by segregating it within a specialty journal. Along these lines, senior leaders can create funding opportunities for those with less access to the foundations and corporations that have shown such an interest in positive social science.

Besides the facilitation of publication and funding, senior leaders can also lend their efforts to legitimize for young people a career as a positive social scientist. This endeavor entails the creation of faculty positions and graduate training programs. It requires the development of appropriate

practicum and internship placements. It means the willingness to write letters of support in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions, not just for junior people who have passed through one's own university but for all members of the next generation. Modern communication innovations make distance mentoring possible, and senior leaders are now able to help young scholars around the world as much as the ones next door or down the hallway.

Another way that senior leaders can nurture the new field is to facilitate the creation and teaching of university courses in positive social science. We have co-taught such a course on several occasions, and it has been the most gratifying teaching experience of our careers. Nonetheless, starting a course from scratch—especially one in a new field—can be daunting, and the young instructor (as well as those long in the teeth) may take the easier route of teaching established courses. To counteract curricular inertia, positive psychology has formed a teaching task force that makes available to anyone interested, sample syllabi, reading lists, classroom exercises, film suggestions, and homework assignments.

We have heard through the positive psychology grapevine that several positive psychology textbooks are currently being written, and we look forward to their publication. The importance of a definitive college textbook in solidifying a new field cannot be underestimated. Modern psychopathology arguably began with Emil Kraepelin's textbook (1899). Sociobiology certainly arrived with the publication of E. O. Wilson's text (1975), and it can be even said that psychology rooted itself firmly in the United States following the publication of *Principles of Psychology* by William James (1890).

4. Identify and celebrate junior scholars.
The field of positive psychology has identified and celebrated exemplary young psychologists engaged in positive psychology. Especially notable poster children include winners of the APA/Templeton Foundation's Positive Psychology Award over the last three years: Barbara Fredrickson, Jonathan Haidt, and Suzanne Segerstrom. These individuals have been given substantial monetary awards, no doubt helpful to them in their lives and careers, but more importantly critical in garnering attention for positive psychology within the academic community and the larger society.

5. Publicize compelling findings.
Why should anyone care about positive social science? As one answer to this question, positive psychology has identified compelling empirical parables—studies that provide a ready handle on the field because their findings are intriguing and nonobvious. When we give talks about positive psychology, we depart from typical colloquium mode and describe such

findings even when they are not part of "our" research programs. Among our favorite findings within the positive psychology framework are:

- the diminishing returns of material wealth for increasing subjective well-being (Myers & Diener, 1995)
- the lack of realism associated with optimism (Alloy & Abramson, 1979)
- the forecasting of presidential elections from the positive traits of candidates (Zullow, Oettingen, Peterson, & Seligman, 1988)
- the increased life expectancy of Academy Award winners relative to runners-up (Redelmeier & Singh, 2001)
- the prediction of marital satisfaction from smiles in college yearbooks (Harker & Keltner, 2001)
- the foretelling of longevity from expressions of happiness in essays by young adults (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001)

Each study provides a memorable take-home message for an audience unaware of what attention to the positive can reveal.

6. Beware bad company.
Let us shift gears and caution against uncritical ecumenicalism. There are individuals attracted to some of the premises of positive social science but who are not enamored of the scientific method; they like the "positive" but overlook the "science." It is therefore important to emphasize that positive social science is not an ideological movement or a secular religion. Our world has enough of these. To be sure, many will provide some insights into the good life that positive social science should explore, but the emphasis needs to be on the exploration of these insights with the tools of science to see which square with the facts-of-the-matter and which do not. Positive psychology is not Esalen for the twenty-first century, the power of positive thinking rendered by 7-point scales, or a smiley face with summer salary support.

The goals of positive psychology are description and explanation as opposed to prescription. The underlying premise of positive social sciences is admittedly prescriptive in that it says that certain topics *should* be studied: positive experiences, positive traits, and positive institutions. But once the study begins, it needs to be hardheaded and dispassionate. The routes to the good life are an empirical matter. Indeed, whether what seems positive is always desirable is also an empirical question.

Our own research into optimism has documented many benefits of posi-

tive thinking (happiness, health, and success in various achievement domains) but at least one notable downside: optimistic thinking is associated with an underestimation of risks (Peterson & Vaidya, in press). Should someone always be optimistic? The empirically based answer is certainly not if one is a pilot or airtraffic controller trying to decide if a plane should take off during an ice storm (Seligman, 1991). Here, the data advise caution and sobriety—pessimism, as it were.

The task for positive social science is to provide the most objective facts possible about the phenomena it studies so that everyday people and society as a whole can make an informed decision about what goals to pursue in what circumstances. Not all of the news will be upbeat, but it will be of value precisely because it provides an appropriately nuanced view of the good life. For example, in our interview studies of individuals with notable strengths of character, we have discovered that almost all of those to whom we have talked report occasional problems when they act in accordance with their most signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2002). Kindness may invite exploitation; honesty can produce resentment; playfulness sometimes ruffles feathers. But our research participants accept these consequences as the price to pay for being true to their nature. The fulfillment that characterizes strength-congruent conduct is not always fun, but perhaps only a prescriptive approach to the good life would expect it to be.

7. *At the same time, avoid elitism, and make positive social science global.*
Let us keep shifting gears as we offer advice. In its goal of cultivating the best and brightest among young scholars, positive psychology runs the risk of being seen as elitist. Positive psychology cannot be a party by invitation only, not if the invitations are delivered only to those with Ivy League addresses. The field needs to be open to any and all earnest scholars (cf. Bacigalupe, 2001).

Another charge of elitism we sometimes hear is that the concerns of positive psychology are a luxury only for the privileged in our society. We ourselves may have inadvertently contributed to this perception. When the field took form in the late 1990s, we speculated that such an endeavor was only possible within a society that was prosperous and at peace. We have since changed our minds. For starters, even in the United States of the 1990s, not everyone was prosperous or a full participant in American society. But is it plausible to think that only rich people care about fulfillment, that only WASPs concern themselves with character, or that only private schools in the suburbs provide quality education?

The events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath changed our thinking profoundly. We are no longer so prosperous, and we are no longer

so much at peace, but if anything, interest in positive psychology has grown. We had the momentary thought that post–September 11, Americans would hunker down and attend to grim basics, postponing the pursuit of the good life until they again felt safe. But this is not what happened, and we now realize that the good life at its core involves how one rises to the occasion. Indeed, we should have studied history more carefully. For good reason, the men and women who successfully mounted the World War II effort are spoken of as the best generation of the twentieth century (Brokaw, 1998). Faced with a terrible crisis from which they could have turned, they instead embraced the occasion. The Allies worked together not only to help win the war but also to usher in an era of unprecedented progress and innovation.

Now, in the aftermath of September 11, there is another occasion to which to rise, and we have some evidence that Americans are doing just that. Our ongoing study of character strengths has found that post–September 11, people report that they are more likely to display the so-called theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity (love) (Peterson & Seligman, in press). Whether these changes will be sustained for a generation or beyond is an empirical matter that we will track with interest, but in the meantime, we have revised our original view about the societal conditions that make positive social science possible. Crisis may be the crucible of character.

So far we have focused on positive psychology as it has taken form in the United States, but positive social science cannot be just a Western endeavor (cf. Walsh, 2001). So, the 2002 Positive Psychology Summit had an explicit international emphasis, and the lessons to be learned about the good life from scholars around the world are rich indeed. We ourselves have been inspired to study what we dub culture-bound strengths of character, like *gelassenheit* among the Old Order Amish, *amae* in Japan, *kuy guyluk* in Korea, or *hao xue xin* in China.

Along these lines, positive social scientists should attempt to identify cultural practices from all parts of the globe that contribute to the good life within given societies. We remember speaking to one of our colleagues in Korea about an exercise we devised for our American college students, asking them to write a letter of appreciation to their favorite high school or elementary school teacher. We were quite proud of our creativity in crafting a gratitude ritual than went beyond the saccharine messages of preprinted Hallmark cards. Our colleague politely heard us out, and then asked, "Do you mean that your students have not already done this many times before?" Apparently, in Korea, every schoolchild every year writes a letter of appreciation to his or her teacher. How many other such cultural practices need to be documented and disseminated across national borders?

8. Acknowledge intellectual predecessors, but position oneself uniquely.
Some of us within positive psychology have raised eyebrows within the academic community by failing to acknowledge fully the contributions of our intellectual predecessors (see Cowen & Kilmer, 2002; Lazarus, in press; Taylor, 2001). Such acknowledgment must of course occur; nothing begins in a vacuum. Not only is it good scholarship to keep the intellectual record straight, but it is also an excellent way to make a new field less exotic and thereby less threatening.

At the same time, we see no benefit of strenuously documenting the unlikely thesis that positive social science is a mere footnote to Lao-Tsu, Confucius, Aristotle, Aquinas, William James, John Dewey, Carl Rogers, or Abraham Maslow. As we have argued, positive psychology has a unique identity and makes novel contributions that go beyond its ancestry, distant and immediate, and one cannot establish a new field by arguing that it really is nothing new, especially when this argument is not valid.

SCIENTIFIC LESSONS

9. Move as quickly as possible from inspirational calls for positive social science to the nitty-gritty work that will define that science—theory and research.
This is probably the overarching lesson we wish to convey, one we as positive psychologists are trying to heed ourselves each and every day. Much of the energy of positive psychologists to date has been devoted to the creation of the infrastructure described earlier in this chapter. This groundwork is necessary, and a bandwagon has been created, exactly as intended. But with the supportive structures in place, it is time to get on with the business of science. What is there to be learned about the good life that Sunday School teachers and grandparents do not already know? What are the causes and consequences of the phenomena of concern to positive psychology? What are the disabling factors and downsides? How can the good life be encouraged, for individuals and societies?

10. Study horses rather than unicorns.
This lesson is borrowed from the clichéd caution to neophyte diagnosticians—do not look for the unusual when the mundane is staring one in the face. If one hears hoof beats, consider first the possibility that they are made by commonplace horses rather than fantastic unicorns. Because the good life is territory largely unexplored by social scientists, no one need start its investigation with esoteric questions, unusual samples, or exotic methods. Valuable information can be obtained by asking very simple questions about the everyday experiences of typical people.

For example, we are currently involved in a study of "excellent" ro-

mantic relationships, and we have begun by asking people to think of the best such relationship that they have ever had and then to describe its nature. This is a simple enough approach, and 88 percent of 299 adults responding so far to our questions can readily describe a true love against which all others pale. We believe that we have already learned things not to be found in the voluminous research on liking and loving, which usually proceeds by asking people to report on their current relationships, some of which may be excellent, but others of which are so-so or even terrible. Only 55 percent of our respondents say that their best relationship is the one in which they are currently involved. That sobering finding is counteracted by another finding: only 19 percent of our respondents say that their best romantic relationship was their first. And we have further learned that the defining features of one's best romantic relationship include communication, dependability, loyalty, shared commitment, fun, and the bringing out of the best in each other—hardly looks and a whole lot of money, as the literature on "mate selection" might imply (cf. Buss, 1994).

For another example likely to be of special interest to the readers of this volume, we are also involved in an analogous study of "excellent" jobs. Again, we are proceeding simply by asking people to think of the best job they have ever had, and then to describe it. Fewer than half of respondents currently work at their most fulfilling job, which was most frequently described as entailing challenge, impact, respect, autonomy, and the opportunity to learn—not compensation, fringe benefits, prestige, or locale. Perhaps in "trading up" to achieve the latter job features, some workers end up sacrificing the former features.

11. Find natural homes for research and application.
Although we believe that the phenomena of interest to positive social science are all around us, we have nonetheless devoted a great deal of thought to where best to find them. What are the natural homes for human excellence? Our rule of thumb is to identify arenas of life where virtuosity is recognized, celebrated, and encouraged. The obvious examples that satisfy this rule are sports, the performing arts, friendships and romances, and school. We are not convinced that the clinic is a good place to look for excellence, despite strengths-based approaches to assessment and therapy (Saleebey, 1992; Seligman & Peterson, in press).

In general, the workplace is a natural home for positive psychology and of course positive organizational scholarship, although a close look suggests that some workplaces more than others consistently celebrate virtuosity. Obviously, one should avoid studying jobs where "rate-busting" and "whistleblowing" are dirty words rather than compliments. One should avoid studying individuals in organizations in which "fitting in" and "getting by"

are the watchwords. Said another way, one should undertake positive organizational scholarship in fields where people are allowed to craft jobs, to turn them into callings (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997).

12. Conduct longitudinal research, listen to what research participants have to say, but also use hard measures where possible.
When we think of the best examples of positive psychology research the studies that come immediately to mind usually share three features: they are longitudinal; they take seriously what research participants have to say by studying narratives, stories, accounts, or archived material that is inherently meaningful; and at the same time, they look at external variables—hard measures so to speak that are not redundant with self-report. What is it that makes these features so compelling?

> We think an answer is provided by considering a typical definition of virtue: Virtue is . . . a disposition to act, desire, and feel that involves the exercise of judgment and leads to a recognizable human excellence or instance of human flourishing. Moreover, virtuous activity involves choosing virtue for itself and in light of some justifiable life plan. (Yearley, 1990: 13)

Flourishing is a process that takes place over time—hence the need for longitudinal research. Although we are trained experimentalists and biased toward the causal inferences that experiments can provide, we admit that much of what is most interesting about the good life needs to be studied by looking at lives as they unfold, not at slices or snapshots of life as captured in the laboratory. Human excellence is part of a justifiable lifeplan—hence the need for studying what people have to say about the good life. And human excellence shows itself in behavior broadly construed—hence the need to go beyond the justifiable lifeplan to include measures, for example, of physical well-being, of sustained relationships, or of achievement.

13. Choose not only positive independent variables but also positive dependent variables.
This final lesson again seems obvious, but it is worth emphasizing that if our interest is in the good life, we must look explicitly at indices of human thriving (Peterson, 2000). Before we became positive psychologists, we studied depression, usually by using a standard depression inventory in which the best one could do was to score zero, indicating the absence of depressive symptoms (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). But not all zero scores are equal. There is a world of difference between people who are *not* suicidal, *not* lethargic, and *not* self-deprecating versus those who bound out of bed in the morning with smiles on their face and twinkles in their eyes. These lat-

ter individuals can only be studied by measuring happiness (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Indeed, positive affect and negative affect are largely independent of one another, which means that exclusive focus on negative emotions cannot allow—even by inference—conclusions about positive emotions (Watson, Clark, & Carey, 1988). Along these lines, optimism and pessimism are semantic opposites but not always psychological opposites (Chang, D'Zurilla, & Maydeu-Olivares, 1994). Measures must allow researchers to break through the zero points of the indicators favored in business-as-usual science. Social psychologists must go beyond surveys of prejudice and discrimination; educational psychologists must go beyond the documentation of school violence, failure, and dropout; and organizational psychologists must go beyond the tracking of workplace theft, absenteeism, and turnover.

CONCLUSION

We hope that positive organizational scholars will find our advice useful as they create their own field. Of course, these lessons must be adapted to the special features of the good organization and its appropriate scientific investigation. But our final bit of advice needs no modification: *have fun in the process*. A grim-faced Cotton Mather has never been the role model of positive psychology, and a misanthropic bottom-line CEO knee-deep in stock options should not be the role model of positive organizational scholarship. We have been invigorated by our reinvention as positive psychologists. We love teaching about the good life to our students, and we love studying it among our fellow human beings. Remember: first loves are not always the best loves.

VIRTUOUS PROCESSES, STRENGTHS, AND POSITIVE ORGANIZING

The chapters in this part introduce concepts embedded within positive organizational scholarship that are rarely examined in scholarly literature. These concepts are related to the ideas of virtuousness and strength—that which is considered good, fulfilling, and praiseworthy—and to the idea of extraordinarily positive behavior. The chapters highlight the organizational processes and positive consequences associated with concepts such as character strength, gratitude, resilience, courage, wisdom, and transcendence. The effects are sometimes extraordinarily positive performance, sometimes the avoidance of mistakes and disasters in tenuous and fragile conditions, sometimes improvement above normal expectations, and sometimes ennobling human conditions. The organizing processes and attributes that enable, and are enabled by, these virtues are highlighted in each chapter.

Looking across the chapters here, at least three especially generative ideas are highlighted. These synergies are also supplemented by a host of fertile insights. Undoubtedly, scholars interested in positive organizational scholarship will find an array of stimulating ideas to pursue in their own research. First, individuals, organizations, and societies cannot function without the demonstration of virtuousness. The collective glue that bonds communities together, the social stability that permits them to function ef-

ficiently, and the exchange relationships that create effective interactions all are embedded, ultimately, in ideas of trust, gratitude, respect, forgiveness, optimism, and other virtues. Whereas this idea was acknowledged by classical writers such as Adam Smith and Georg Simmel, concepts related to virtuousness have seldom been examined in modern organizational studies. Several of these chapters rigorously define a particular organizational virtue, embed the virtue in scholarly literature, and offer scientific evidence for why the virtue has salutatory effects on individuals, organizations, and societies. For example, Park and Peterson discuss six core virtues—wisdom and knowledge, courage, love, justice, temperance, and transcendence—and their relationships to good workplaces, good schools, and good societies. Emmons links gratitude, Cameron links organizational virtuousness, and Sutcliffe and Vogus link resilience to positive individual and organizational performance. Worline and Quinn show how courageous principled action is necessary for organizational and societal effectiveness.

A second generative idea is that some virtues are, by nature, attributes of organizations, not individuals. The existence of social relationships and collectivities is a prerequisite to virtues such as peace, equity, forgiveness, justice, compassion, and love. Hence, the commonly articulated viewpoint that virtues belong in the domain of religion, philosophy, or psychology misses a huge opportunity in the organizational sciences. Several chapters point out that virtues have several characteristics in common, the implications of which deserve more investigation in organizations. For example, virtues are freely chosen and are often displayed irrespective of, or in contradiction to, organizational constraints. Virtues lead to human fulfillment even though they are pursued for their own sake (Aristotle's *eudemonia*), not to obtain a personal reward or benefit. And, virtues inoculate and strengthen organizations against adversity, and they facilitate a greater degree of improvement than a focus on problem solving or weaknesses. Chapters by Weick, Worline and Quinn, and Bateman and Porath, in particular, highlight the fact that virtues are often positively deviant—that is, they are pursued despite pressures and constraints in organizations that would mitigate such behavior. Chapters by Park and Peterson, Cameron, and Bateman and Porath discuss the self-motivating quality of virtues and their association with intrinsic motivation rather than external incentives. And chapters by Clifton and Harter, Sutcliffe and Vogus, and Weick describe studies showing increases in individual and organizational functioning when a focus is placed on strengths and virtues instead of on weaknesses.

Third, definitions of what is and is not positive—or what is and is not virtuous—depend on the starting point. For example, in conditions characterized by unpredictability, complexity, vagueness, and tumultuousness, organizations tend to experience entropy and high error rates. Rapid

change, environmental jolts, or tragedies can destroy an organization's ability to produce highly reliable outcomes and to operate efficiently. Because most organizations are designed for control and predictability, aberrant conditions create vulnerability and fragility. Hence, positive organizational behavior is sometimes evidenced by mere normality—an absence of mistakes and crises—rather than by extraordinary or positively deviant behavior. Preserving the status quo is frequently a major victory amid difficult circumstances. Weick's chapter points out, for example, that "to go through a day with a million accidents waiting to happen and find, at the end of the day, that they are still waiting to happen is amazing." Sutcliffe and Vogus identify ways in which organizations flourish in the midst of adversity by developing the capability of resilience. Clifton and Harter review studies showing that helping people to begin with a focus on their strengths is more fruitful than starting from a standpoint of weakness. Cameron's and Emmons' chapters highlight the buffering function of virtues that help inoculate organizations in fragile conditions, thereby avoiding harmful consequences. These chapters identify virtues such as respect, personal concern, humility, and gratitude as among the factors accounting for normal outcomes.

These chapters raise a multitude of intriguing questions that are left for future investigation. Some questions overlap among the various authors, and some unique questions are related to the particular topic addressed in the chapter. Taken as a whole, these chapters invite investigators to join in pursuing questions such as: To what extent are the demonstrated associations between virtues and individual outcomes transferable to organizations? How are virtues best identified and measured in an organizational context? How are virtues, and the positive outcomes associated with them, enacted and nurtured in organizations? What structures, processes, and cultures are most conducive to, or resistant of, virtues in organizations? What are the causal relationships between virtues and the various indicators of desirable individual and organizational outcomes? What time horizons must be taken into account in studying the development of virtues, the demonstration of virtues, and the effects produced by virtues? Whereas each chapter addresses some elements of these research questions, much is to be learned as additional work is developed.

this material has been excerpted from

Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline

by Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn, Editors
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers
Copyright © 2009, All Rights Reserved.
For more information, or to purchase the book,
please visit our website
www.bkconnection.com