Martin Seligman

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Principle background ideas as relevant biographical information

Martin Seligman is a psychologist who was born in 1942 and is known as the father and the leading researcher in the field of psychology. Currently, he is the ZellerbachFamily professor of psychology and the director of the positive psychology center.

Historical events that influenced the theorist

The theorist was influenced by various issues like his writings on; the optimistic child, abnormal psychology, authentic happiness, and learned optimism. The event that contributed significantly to his theory is the topic of learned helplessness. Another event is his desire and efforts to explore human potential scientifically(Seligman& Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The theory is established on three central concerns that might have led the theorist to engage in understanding the theory which are positive experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions.

Key concepts of the theory

The theory of positive psychology is based on various topics such as character strengths, optimism, life satisfaction, well-being, happiness, compassion, self-esteem, gratitude, hope, and self-confidence. The principles that make up the theory are positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment(Seligman, Steen, Park,&Peterson, 2005). Trying to understand positive emotions leads to the study of contentment with the past, being happy with the present and having hope for the future.

Formulate ideas on how theory is used today

Positive psychology currently helps people to understand what gives our lives meaning and purpose. It helps people to live within the virtues that enable individuals and communities to succeed. People can use their strengths and positive traits to get the motivation needed to apply their positive strengths and contribute to society. Peoplecan use this theory to stay positive even in a society that is faced with negativity. Therefore, positive psychology is useful in our daily living.

References

Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279-298). Springer, Dordrecht.

Seligman, M. E., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American psychologist*, *60*(5), 410.