



# How to ‘flourish’

## A visionary new understanding of happiness & wellbeing

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What does it mean to ‘flourish’? How would you describe it? What images come to mind when you hear the word ‘flourish’.

### What is ‘flourishing’?

Felicia Huppert and Timothy So of the University of Cambridge defined and measured flourishing in the EU by administering a well-being survey to over 2000 citizens in 23 EU nations. The definition of flourishing used by Huppert and So is in the spirit of wellbeing theory: To flourish, an individual must have all the ‘core features’ and three out of the six ‘additional features’, listed here.

#### Core features

- Positive emotions
- Engagement, interest, love of learning
- Meaning, purpose, feeling my life is valuable and worthwhile

#### Additional features

- Self-esteem, feeling positive about self
- Optimism, feeling optimistic about my future
- Resilience, how quickly I bounce back when things go wrong
- Vitality
- Self-determination
- Positive relationships, there are people in my life who really care about me

The outcome of the survey in each nation showed Denmark at the top, with 33% of its citizens flourishing, UK in the middle with 18% and Russia at the bottom with only 6% of its citizens flourishing. <sup>pp27-28</sup>

As the ability to measure and index the wellbeing surveys, we can begin to ask with rigour:

1. How many people in a corporation, city or country are flourishing.
2. When in their lifetime is an individual flourishing.
3. When is a charity increasing the flourishing of its beneficiaries.
4. Are our school systems helping our children flourish.

This flourishing index could become the new measure by which governments are held to account, not merely GDP. It could be used to assess public policy; e.g. How much will building this new school rather than this park (green space) increase flourishing? Or, by how much a program of paying parents to take extra time at home raising their children increases flourishing? <sup>pp28-9</sup>

As legal practitioners, we could ask, *Is what I’m doing for my employees or colleagues or clients assisting them to flourish?*

Seligman has changed his mind since he developed the authentic happiness theory, it has expanded to and been replaced by his wellbeing theory.

ORIGINAL AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS THEORY	SELIGMAN’S NEW WELLBEING THEORY
<b>Topic:</b> Happiness	<b>Topic:</b> Wellbeing
<b>Measure:</b> Life satisfaction	<b>Measures:</b> Positive emotions, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment
<b>Goal:</b> Increase life satisfaction	<b>Goal:</b> Increase flourishing by increasing positive emotions, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment

The Positive Psychology movement, founded by Professor Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, engages in the scientific exploration of human wellness and optimal functioning to help people mend what is broken and go on to expand their potential and thrive. <https://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/School/Positive-Education/What-is-Positive-Education-/About-Positive-Psychology>

One Australian example described in Seligman's book, Flourish, is Geelong Grammar School which has embedded Positive Education in its operations. Positive education focuses on learning and teaching for wellbeing and academic mastery. <file:///C:/Users/PDO/Downloads/588-3360-1-PB.pdf>

Positive Education focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Through teaching these valuable life skills, Geelong Grammar School provides its students with an increased capacity to learn effectively, as well as offering them a strong foundation on which they can build a successful life.

<https://www.ggs.vic.edu.au/School/Positive-Education/What-is-Positive-Education>

This program is delivered throughout the school in three components: 'Teaching' it, 'Embedding' it (being kind, writing gratitude letters, savouring good memories, overcoming negativity bias, being grateful at the end of each day, etc.) and 'Living' it (at home as well as at school and being aware of the family's signature strengths, where sports teachers teach the skill of letting go of grudges, art teachers focus on the savouring of beauty, etc.),<sup>p89</sup>

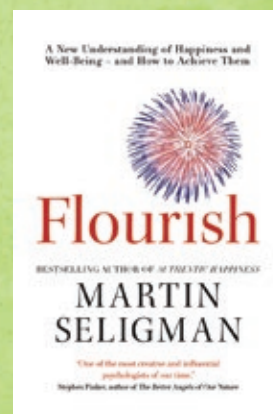
### **If it's a given we want our law firms and workplaces to flourish, what can we do to enhance our wellbeing?**

#### **We could:**

1. At the weekly team meeting, review what went well and why over the past week?<sup>p33</sup>
2. As a team exercise, get everyone to take the Signature Strengths exercise, and share their strengths in the group and identify where they are using those strengths in their life. We know people will be more productive and happy when working with their natural values and strengths. Each person has all 24 character strengths in different degrees, which is reflected in their unique character profile. Take the free test and select the top five character strengths to share, I'm sure they will not be a surprise to you or others who know you well. Then plan to use one of those strengths in a new way during the following week,<sup>p39</sup> <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/surveys/finished/10506871>
3. Perhaps before getting everyone to share their top 5 character strengths from the survey, encourage others in the team to identify them for each staff.

4. Discuss ways to cultivate more pleasure, engagement and meaning to the work your team does.
5. Have a discussion in the team meeting about the fact that 'satisficers' (e.g. it's good enough) has better wellbeing outcomes than 'maximisers' (e.g. I have to be the perfect lawyer, negotiator, mediator, judge).
6. Lead a discussion about how a full life integrates pleasure, engagement and meaning, and how our current work (and life) provides that or what could we change to ensure you experience a deep and rewarding life where you FLOURISH.

This book and others like it will add value to your knowledge and approaches to a rich life. ■



**LAW SOCIETY NT**

**WALK FOR Wellness**

**Please join us for a 45-minute walk led by Justice Kelly**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**7 am, Monday 7 October 2019 starting @ Supreme Court NT**

**Keep an eye out on the Practitioner e-newsletter and social media for updates as they occur.**

**See you there!**