

# Positive Psychology

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**Positive psychology** cultivates habits of the mind that contribute to feeling good about life. It isn't about ignoring difficult things, but about taking in the big picture and focusing on the positive parts.

## You...

- ... Deserve to be here and have a place here at UVA.
- ... Have the agency to choose who you are, where you go, what you do, and who you hang out with.
- ... Don't have to have life figured out.
- ... Are stronger than you may think.

## Be Perfectly Imperfect

Everyone struggles, and it's okay – even beneficial – to feel challenged by life. It is easy to compare our own insides (how we are) with other people's outsides (how they appear). Be mindful of this, especially in social media. **Avoiding these types of social comparisons** frees you to be your perfectly imperfect self. **Opening up to others and talking about how you really feel** can bring people closer, and you might be surprised how often others have similar feelings.



"Be adaptable. Surprises will happen."  
D.M., Curry 2017



## Squash ANTs

Sometimes people have **automatic negative thoughts** (ANTs), which aren't true but make people feel yucky anyway.

If you notice ANTs, take a closer look and replace them with more realistic thoughts so you can feel better!

Squash this ANT:	Try this truth:
<b>Catastrophizing:</b> "I botched the test, I won't get into grad school, and I'll be unemployed forever!"	"I didn't do well on this test, but it happens sometimes, and I know I can improve next time."
<b>Absolutes:</b> "I am the only one at UVA not going out tonight."	"It's okay not to sometimes not have plans. It's normal, and it's a good chance to chill."
<b>Guilt:</b> "I should make my bed every day, and if I don't I'm a bad person."	"I am free to make my choices without feeling guilty."
<b>Mind reading:</b> "My TA forgot my name so I think she hates me."	"It's a big class, so I might need to introduce myself more than once."
<b>Fortune telling:</b> "I didn't make the team! Now I'll never find a group!"	"I don't know what will happen if I try again. Even if I don't get in, I don't have to feel embarrassed."

## Say Thanks!

Feeling grateful benefits physical, emotional, and social well-being. Although it can be hard on tough days, you can practice choosing gratitude throughout your days and weeks.

## Give!

**Helping others**, like by cheering up a friend or volunteering, can improve your community. Knowing how to boost your own mood by **giving to yourself** can help you gain a greater sense of resiliency. Try listening to music, going outside for fresh air, calling home or a friend, watching a funny video, or making a cup of tea.

## Empower Yourself by Getting Feedback

Ever feel rotten after receiving feedback about a class assignment, extracurricular project, or personal actions? Instead of fearing feedback, try asking for it. Telling your professor, supervisor, club president, or friend that you **WANT** ideas for how to grow can improve communication, foster collaboration, and help you feel more in control. This way, you're less likely to feel badly, plus you get awesome pointers for building new skills.

## HOO KNEW ?

**93.1% of UVA students believe overcoming challenging life experiences helps them thrive.\***

\*From the Spring 2015 Health Survey with responses from 931 UVA students

"Focus on what is important to you now – not just the future. Appreciate what you have now."

A.J., CLAS 2019

## Resources

**Madison House HELP Line** (434) 295-TALK  
No issue is too big or too small. They're here to listen. They serve all.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** (434) 243-5150  
Call to see how CAPS can best support you.

Talk to us at [StallSeatJournal@virginia.edu](mailto:StallSeatJournal@virginia.edu)!

Want this poster for your room? Feel free to take me home Feb. 13-17.

