

Traditional Psychology	Positive Psychology
Goal: to reduce symptoms, make life less miserable	Goal: reduce symptoms, promote happiness, prevent future problems; make life worthwhile
Assumes that an absence of illness and problems equals happiness	Assumes absence of problems is not happiness but vulnerability for future problems and sign of impoverished present
Skill: accept, deconstruct, remediate, “deal” with the past (and present)	Skill: re-focus attention/memory towards positives, build future and be led by it, enhance present moment
Past required to make change; people revisit past because something there to do or learn	Past not required to change; people revisit it because nothing to look at today or tomorrow
People are broken, need to be changed, victim of psychological force, need help with disorder	People are self-motivated, autonomous, growth-oriented, need skills to grow
Discussing problems is curative and eases symptoms (repair what is wrong)	Building strengths and generating positive emotion is curative (build what is strong)
Focus on negatives (trivializes the positives, assumes only negatives are worth analysis)	Focus on positives to repair, promote, and prevent; positives are worthy of analysis
Not appealing to clients; hard to motivate to focus on problem, feel worse first	Highly appealing to clients: can save face, move forward, feel better quickly