

A black silhouette of a person sitting in a meditative pose, possibly a Zen monk, is positioned on the left side of the slide. The person is facing right, with their back to the viewer, and their hands resting on their knees. The background is a soft, misty landscape with mountains and a body of water, rendered in shades of teal and light blue.

Buddhist Psychology: From Trauma to Enlightenment

Session 7: Optimal Experience or Gates of Liberation?

Presented by Lotus Vu, CCC, Zen Teacher & Psychotherapist
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Covered in this session

- Positive Psychology of Well-Being
- Comparing between Clinical, Positive Psychology and Buddhism
- Pillars of Positive Psychology and Buddhism's Well-Being
- Psychology of Flow vs. Wu Wei vs. Non-Dual Experience
- The 3 Gates of Liberation

Positive Psychology

- A school of psychology focused on what creates/enhance happiness and well-being.
- Famous proponents are Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Tal Ben-Shahar.

Clinical Psychology and Positive Psychology – A Brief Comparative Analysis

<i>Clinical Psychology</i>	<i>Positive Psychology</i>
1. Focuses on symptoms and challenges to reach a solution.	1. Focuses on positive thoughts, emotions, and actions to reach a solution.
2. Aims to validate theories and put pieces of evidence together to explain and treat a mental condition.	2. Aims to promote happiness and operates on principles that support wellbeing.
3. Digs into the past to explore the causal factors.	3. Explores the present and the future to find better ways of living.
4. Includes areas like education, learning disabilities, depression, stress, addiction, trauma, etc.	4. Includes areas of strength, virtues, talents, abilities, and self-enhancement.
5. Operates in the presence of a problem.	5. Operates with or without psychopathology.
6. Is preventive and recovery-oriented.	6. Is preventive and precautionary.

Positive Psychology and Buddhism – A Brief Comparative Analysis

<i>Buddhism</i>	<i>Positive Psychology</i>
1. Focuses on increasing positive emotions and tolerating negative ones to release it	1. Focuses on positive thoughts, emotions, and actions to reach a solution.
2. Aims to promote self-exploration through introspection and meditation, and strengthen connections with others.	2. Aims to promote happiness and operates on principles that support wellbeing.
3. Understand the present, but be mindful of past patterns in the present and present actions that affect the future.	3. Explores the present and the future to find better ways of living.
4. Includes all areas of life from personal, professional, social and spiritual while observing the present to gain insights into these aspects.	4. Includes areas of strength, virtues, talents, abilities, and self-enhancement.
5. Operates without psychopathologizing sufferings.	5. Operates with or without psychopathology.
6. Is understanding, acceptance and change, that's recovery, preventative and precautionary oriented	6. Is preventive and precautionary.

Enlightenment of the Buddha

- <https://youtu.be/EiseKrDBVeQ?si=skWTWIRr2Dvw3OB6>

Positive Psychology

4 Burgers

Pillars of Positive Psychology that Improves Mental Health

1. Focus on the positives/ Count your blessing
2. Practice gratitude!
3. Learning from negative experiences
4. Mindfulness
5. Healthy lifestyle (exercise, food, good sleep, good company)
6. Monitor your moods and emotions: understand them!

Pillars of Buddhism's Well-Being

1. Walk everyday (as the Buddha did 20 km a day) or exercise daily.
2. Eat healthy (1 meal a day or OMAD fasting, vegetarianism)
3. Meditation (Jhanas, Mindfulness, Loving-kindness etc..)
4. Reflections/recollections: learning from negative and positive experiences by observing them deeply and dispassionately.
5. Keep out of trouble (follow the precepts)
6. Keep good company for support (helpful friends, sangha and teacher)

The Psychology of Flow

https://youtu.be/74Wei0-vAZs?si=SSj9jcuPcx_swjSe

Wu Wei (Non-Doing)

https://youtu.be/NvZi7ZV-SWI?si=zg5qs1Z4l_RhAUzw

Flow vs. Non-dual Experience

Flow	Non-dual (non-doing/Wu-Wei)
Effortless	Effortless
Concentrated and Absorbed	Open and aware (non-absorbed)
Timeless	Timeless
Pleasurable	No-pleasure
Non-goal oriented	Non-goal oriented
With practice and skills (not too difficult, not too hard)	Non-attached to results, doesn't require skills or practice
Object oriented	Non-object oriented (lack of perceptual schemas)
Self-process temporarily paused	Self-processes can happen, but it doesn't affect experience.
Doesn't require wisdom or insights	Requires wisdom and/or insights to enter

Three Gates of Liberation

1. Emptiness or Non-self
2. Signlessness (absence of characteristics)
3. Aimlessness or Desirelessness

Prizes



Generosity

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