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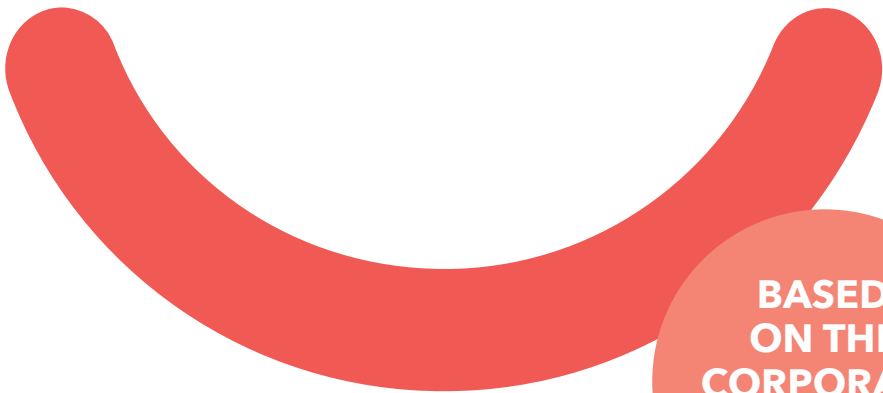
TEAM SMILE

BASED ON THE CORPORATE POSITIVITY® METHOD

creating a workplace where everyone feels good

Lannoo Campus

CONTENTS

'If we are to preserve culture,
we must continue to create it.'

JOHAN HUIZINGA

WELCOME

We live in a turbulent era: economic crises, globalization, social and demographic shifts, pandemics, technological revolutions, and geopolitical crises. In these times, we must stay resilient. Well-being demands our attention. Transition, evolution, change, and revolution require courage and flexibility from everyone. Organisations are searching. Well-being is a growing need. It is a recurring demand in many of our projects across various sectors.

From our practice, we have seen and experienced the 'inner workings' of many organisations. We do not want to stand on the sidelines. Years ago, we sought a way to support organisations and discovered positive psychology. Positive psychology is a dynamic way to work towards the 'flourishing' of yourself, your team, and your organization, in any context. We were moved and inspired by it.

For many years, we have facilitated a wide range of development trajectories. Introducing positive psychology into organisations has had a positive impact on the culture within them. This was and remains our conviction. We had the opportunity to gain practical experiences in all possible market segments. We searched for patterns in organisations that either strengthened or hindered the culture. We researched which habits are necessary to move towards a positive organizational culture and experience well-being. After all, culture is the powerful, beating heart of every organization. People create that culture, and in turn, that culture shapes people.

We are different from others in this regard. "Yeah, right," you might be thinking now ⌣. And yet, it's true. There has been so much research and writing on talents, qualities, optimism, flow, mindset, self-leadership, workplace happiness, and so on. But what we couldn't find anywhere was a coherent and practical translation for organisations. That was the beginning of our journey. Reading, testing, writing, reworking, retesting, stepping back, diving back in, refining, and so forth. This is how corporate positivity® grew: the method to bring a fresh breeze through organisations.

Corporate positivity helps in recruitment by attracting talents. Loyalty also grows. Employees enjoy being with an employer where they feel good and look forward to going to work every day. A positive culture also facilitates social interaction, teamwork, and open communication. There is more fun, motivation, and energy in a positive environment. Finally, the link between strong corporate cultures and results is clear.

We are firmly convinced that corporate positivity makes a positive contribution. Focusing on corporate positivity contributes to well-being in an energetic culture. It is our mission to inspire people around this concept and to launch it into the world together with a team of corporate positivity activists. In this book, we address everyone working in human resources, every manager, C-level executives, and experts. But the book is, of course, aimed at anyone who wants to contribute to a positive corporate culture. Not tomorrow, but today.

Go in search of your smile, have a wonderful journey of discovery!

Positive
mindset

Positive
connection

**CORPORATE
POSITIVITY®**

Positive
communication

Positive
ambiance

Positive
engagement

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

HOW IT ALL STARTED

I t is 1997. Somewhere on a beach in Kona, a resort town on the west coast of Hawaii, two men meet seemingly by chance. Martin Seligman, an American psychologist and scientist, is at that time working on learned optimism. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian psychologist and researcher, is studying flow. On the beach in Kona, Csikszentmihalyi is taken by surprise by the power of the ocean. He unfortunately collides with a volcanic rock. Seligman witnesses the accident and helps him to a first aid station on the beach. The rest is history. The two men find common ground in a shared belief: traditional psychology is too heavily focused on addressing psychological issues such as trauma, anxiety, and depression.

Their days on the island are subsequently filled with discussions about what is missing in traditional psychology. They both believe that focusing on human strengths, qualities, and optimal functioning, rather than a focus on dysfunction, can lead to wonderful outcomes, to the 'flourishing of people'. They inspire one another with a shared passion to do something about it. They set to work as convinced activists in the field of positive psychology. By 1998, they manage to put positive psychology on the agenda at the annual

conference of the American Psychology Association (APA). This proves to be a great success. Conferences worldwide quickly follow. Positive psychology is born.

Positive psychology has grown into a recognised movement within the science of psychology. It is not a different science in itself. It uses the same scientific research methods. What differs are the subjects of study and research and the questions being asked: 'What works?' rather than 'What doesn't work?'; 'In what areas does a person function well?' rather than 'What is the person's dysfunction?'. A renewed realism. No 'happyology', no magic wand, no toxic positivity. Positive psychology has three core ingredients: acknowledging what is not going well, reinforcing what is going well, and exploring where you want to go. In the meantime, positive psychology has become a field that fascinates numerous scientists. Among others, Barbara Frederickson, Ilona Boniwell, Scott Berry Kaufman, Corey Keyes, Christopher Peterson, and Martin Seligman continue to advance it to this day.

A DEFINITION

For a long time, traditional psychology focused on dysfunction. There is a historical explanation for this. Between the two World Wars, three goals were defined in the field of psychology: processing trauma; giving more meaning to life; and cultivating talents. After the Second World War, the latter two goals were largely lost. Psychological science began to concentrate on the first objective. It is not surprising that after a human crisis of such magnitude, the focus and associated funds flowed towards the treatment of trauma.

This fundamental idea of an exclusive 'disease model' is now outdated. Since 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has defined health as physical, social, and mental well-being, not merely the absence of 'disease' or 'disorder'. The field is still finding its way. As is often the case with definitions: the deeper you dig, the more you discover. This is certainly true when we examine positive psychology. Below you will find a number of definitions. We do not aim for completeness in listing these definitions.

'Positive psychology is nothing more than the scientific study of human strengths and virtues.'
Sheldon, M. & King, L.

'The study of conditions under which people thrive and the techniques that promote human well-being.'
Steerneman, P.

'Positive psychology is the scientific study of what goes right in life, from birth to death and at all stops in between. It is a newly christened approach within psychology that seriously investigates what makes life most worth living.'
Peterson, C.

'The scientific study of optimal human functioning with the aim of discovering and promoting factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive.'
Seligman, M.

Ten years of reading and working around this theme led us to the following definition to achieve practical results: Positive psychology is the science of optimal functioning for individuals, groups, and organisations: emotionally, psychologically, and socially, in any context.

We explain below what the three layers of this definition concretely mean.

OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING OF INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND ORGANISATIONS

The goal of positive psychology is to enhance flourishing. The founder of the concept of 'flourishing' is Corey Keyes. It is during his quest for more knowledge and insight into well-being that he centralised the concept of 'flourishing'. According to him, flourishing is not just about being happy, in the sense of a euphoric end state. It is about continuously working on yourself, continually developing yourself, and undertaking actions to change situations. This requires effort and dedication. Everyone can flourish, based on

their own choices. When you flourish, you function better; you feel good; you do good for yourself, for others, and for society.

Emotional, Psychological, and Social Well-Being

Flourishing consists of three components: emotional, psychological, and social. Emotional functioning involves experiencing positive feelings, such as joy, love, wonder, gratitude, and pride. Psychological functioning describes having positive thoughts, such as focusing on and trusting in one's strengths, and concentrating on enhancing qualities. Social functioning pertains to experiencing positive processes, such as thriving in relationships, groups, communities, in any context.

Positive psychology is one of the fastest-growing subdisciplines in psychology. It finds its applications in many domains: neuroscience, criminology, risk management, positive health, positive coaching, and organisational psychology. The science provides us with elements that support and undermine well-being, through the efforts of academics, literature, professional associations, activism, and public opinion. Positive psychology offers unique opportunities to address societal challenges. However, we would like to add a side note. Positive psychology is also criticised for primarily focusing on findings from Western or European contexts: Western, European, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) contexts.

How is your mental health? Answer the fourteen questions in Table 1 about the past month.

TABLE 1. TEST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH						
In the past month, how often did you feel that...	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Regu-larly	Often	(Al-most) always
1. you were happy						
2. you were interested in life						
3. you were satisfied						
4. you made an important contribution to society						
5. you were part of a commu-nity (social group, neighbour-hood, town)						
6. our society is becoming better for people						
7. people are fundamentally good						
8. you understand how our society works						
9. you liked most aspects of your personality						
10. you could handle your daily responsibilities well						
11. you had warm and trusting relationships with others						
12. you were challenged to grow or become a better person						
13. you confidently thought and expressed your own ideas and opinions						
14. your life had direction or meaning						

Source: Mental Health Continuum Short Test by Corey Keyes (all rights reserved)

- Your answers to questions 1 - 3 reflect your emotional well-being, the experience of positive emotions.
- Your answers to questions 4 – 8 reflect your social well-being, the experience of positive interactions.
- Your answers to questions 9 - 14 reflect your psychological well-being, the presence of positive thoughts.
- All answers combined reflect your overall positive mental health.

Well-being and wellness are described as synonyms in dictionaries and online. However, positive psychology makes a significant distinction between the two (Bohlmeijer, 2013). Well-being encompasses more than wellness. In well-being, we find the three components previously described: emotions, thoughts, and social interactions. Wellness is the degree to which someone feels good in their own skin. Consequently, it may only relate to one of the three components. Good news: our overall well-being is determined by 50% by our genes; 10% by circumstances, and 40% by behaviour and skills (Bohlmeijer, 2013). This means we hold the keys to maintaining or enhancing our well-being.

We hope that you, too, will be convinced of the impact of positive psychology on yourself and others.

CULTURE

Culture is, in essence, what humans create. Opposite to this stands 'nature'. Nature is what has arisen spontaneously and without human intervention. We provide a brief, theoretical description of the concept of 'culture'. What is culture? Just a handshake? Or rather a hug? Two kisses? Or three? Or four? How do you greet the people around you? Have you ever received a nose rub? Chances are, you haven't. But if you ask an Inuit, they will consider it a common practice.

It's fun to watch the video 'Greetings around the World'. It shows a tangible experience of culture. Culture is everywhere. Populations are characterised by their culture. Families, teams, and organisations also have their own culture. Culture is about 'behaviour', the way we do things. Culture is about 'us', what we as a group of individuals collectively do and share: values, beliefs, rituals, stories, heroes, habits, rules, language, and so on. All around the world, people create order out of chaos. This is how culture grows. Culture is a shared reality, and it is not static. Culture develops, along with the people creating it. Thus, culture is the most important binding agent of groups, of organisations and their leaders. Culture is what you and I teach each other. It is learned behaviour.

Culture has a visible side, but also an invisible side. The visible side includes the rituals, the habits, the behaviours. Everything people do and say. The invisible side is what lies beneath the surface: values, beliefs, and the unwritten rules that stem from them. We connect with what we find important, thereby transcending individual interests. This allows one to identify with the DNA of culture.

HOW DOES CULTURE TAKE SHAPE?

Culture is neither good nor bad. It also never stands still. Every expression of culture has, at some point, been beneficial to the members of its group. These are responses formulated to meet needs: questions about existence and survival, as well as questions about cooperation and relationship building. How do we adapt as a group? How do we function and communicate together? Braun and Kramer (2015) describe several apparent dualities in our needs that can help us better understand this social process in which people in a group interact:

- **Need for routine and stability versus the need for new connections and diversity**: we warmly welcome a new team member, yet at the same time, we hope that this new person does not propose too many changes to our way of working.
- **Need for group formation versus the need to be seen as an individual**: we value the annual team-building event, yet we also want to stand on stage to present a personal contribution during that day.
- **Need for hierarchy versus the need for equality and connection**: we find it necessary for someone to set the guidelines, yet we do not want a leader who acts in an authoritarian manner.

Culture is dynamic. It is a continuous whirlpool of events. Over generations, there is a certain continuity. At the same time, its content is continually adjusted by new generations, each looking at the past from their own perspective. This is how new patterns emerge within a culture. This also applies within organisations. Consider hybrid working: a few years ago, working from home was unthinkable in many organisations, but now it is often the norm. Think of the concept of 'open plan' offices: about ten years ago, many

offices were converted from individual offices to a single open space. In the meantime, there has already been another adjustment: instead of providing one hundred percent office space for employees, it is now often reduced to eighty percent.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

When we talk about organisational culture, we often refer to 'strong' cultures, 'toxic' cultures, 'customer-oriented' cultures, 'people-oriented' cultures, and 'innovative' cultures. Organisational culture is the set of shared written and unwritten norms, values, and behavioural rules that influence employees' functioning. It is the way things are done within an organisation.

We believe in the power and energy of a positive culture. As early as 2015, Harvard Business Review reported that positive work cultures are more productive (Seppälä & Kameron, 2015). A positive culture requires a structured approach, and corporate positivity is the ideal method for this. The strength of the method lies in its guidance on creating a positive work culture and detailing how to achieve this. We filtered the most relevant concepts for organisations from positive psychology, making the method unique. It integrates five patterns that have the greatest impact on driving an organisational culture: engagement, ambiance, connection, mindset, and communication. These patterns emerge when developing certain habits. Figure 1 provides an overview of the five patterns, each with four habits. You can learn, deepen, and internalise them.

The patterns of engagement, ambiance, connection, mindset, and communication are dynamic. There is no specific order. Start with what appeals to you the most to get you moving. Each pattern also includes cases based on our experience, marked with an ⌣ icon. We encourage you to test and try things here and there, which you will also recognise by the ›› icon.

This book provides both theoretical perspectives and real-life cases along with practical tips. Here's a tip to get you started: take notes of the tips you'd like to put into action immediately. This will get you moving. Together with Team Smile, this method has also been incorporated into the 360° corporate positivity®-scan and the corporate positivity® e-learning platform. Together, they are an ideal foundation for organisations that deliberately choose to create an environment where everyone feels good.

Sometimes the dreams that come true are the dreams you didn't even know you had.