

Improving Your Life with the PERMA Model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment)

Objective

To develop areas of your life which will lead to a greater sense of satisfaction and fulfillment.

What to Know

The PERMA model, developed by Dr. Martin Seligman, is a Positive Psychology framework designed to help individuals build a life filled with well-being, satisfaction, and meaning. PERMA stands for Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment—five essential elements contributing to a fulfilling life.

In your daily life, you may find yourself focused on managing challenges or reducing intense feelings. While addressing these concerns is important, research in Positive Psychology shows that increasing the experience of joy, developing your purpose, and building connections boost your resilience, enhance mental well-being, and give you tools to cope.

Each component in the PERMA model serves as a foundation for developing well-being.

1. **Positive Emotion.** Positive emotions, such as joy, gratitude, serenity, and hope, are not just fleeting moments of happiness. They create a "buffer" that builds mental resilience, helping you better cope with stress. When you actively focus on positive experiences, you encourage a habit of noticing and appreciating good moments, which can help balance out life's difficulties.
 - **Tip:** Savor positive moments when they happen, like noticing how a warm cup of coffee smells or appreciating the beauty of a sunset. Small acts of noticing can lift your mood and build lasting well-being.

Write down two recent moments or events that brought you joy, gratitude, hope, or serenity.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

2. **Engagement.** Engagement, or "flow," is about becoming deeply absorbed in an activity that challenges you just enough to keep you interested without overwhelming you. You lose track of time because you are so focused and immersed in what you are doing. Engagement increases your sense of accomplishment, builds skill, and leads to lasting happiness.
 - **Tip:** Think about activities where you lose track of time—whether it's cooking, drawing, working on a puzzle, or gardening. Spend time every week doing something that engages you for a mental break and a renewed sense of energy.

Write down two activities where you lose track of time.

1) _____

2) _____

3. **Relationships.** Positive relationships with others provide a strong source of support, love, and connection. Relationships can improve your mood and contribute to better physical and mental health. Connecting with others helps you feel less isolated and more understood, giving you a safe space to express yourself and receive encouragement.

- **Tip:** Nurture meaningful connections by regularly contacting friends or family members. Small, positive interactions—even a brief phone call or message—can strengthen your relationships and boost your well-being.

Write down two supportive, healthy relationships you have.

1) _____

2) _____

4. **Meaning.** A sense of meaning refers to understanding and pursuing a purpose that feels larger than yourself. This can come from many sources, such as helping others, practicing your faith, contributing to a community, or pursuing work that aligns with your values. A sense of meaning provides a foundation for resilience and offers motivation, even during difficult times.

- **Tip:** Reflect on what gives you a sense of purpose. Are there values, causes, or hobbies that feel meaningful to you? Spending time on things that contribute to a sense of purpose can be deeply rewarding.

Write down two things that give you a sense of meaning.

1) _____

2) _____

5. **Accomplishment:** Setting and achieving goals gives you a sense of accomplishment and reinforces a positive self-image. Every goal does not need to be big—small, everyday achievements like finishing a book, learning a new recipe, or organizing your closet contribute to a sense of progress and self-worth.

- **Tip:** Break larger goals into small, manageable steps. Each small win creates momentum, helping you build confidence and motivation over time.

Write down two goals you can break down into smaller steps.

1) _____

2) _____

The PERMA model is unique because it shifts the focus from “what’s wrong” to “what makes life worth living.” By consciously working to increase each of these five areas, you can build a well-rounded foundation for mental well-being.

PERMA does not require drastic life changes. Small, everyday actions—whether connecting with a friend or spending a few minutes reflecting on what went well today—can significantly impact well-being.

The exercises in this worksheet will help you explore and strengthen each PERMA component in your life. Reflect on which areas come naturally to you and which might need more attention.

What to Do

Take a few moments to reflect on each PERMA area and how it currently manifests in your life. Answer the questions below to help you understand where you are now and where you’d like to grow.

Positive Emotion. *Helps counteract negative thought patterns and increases resilience.* What activities or moments bring you happiness, comfort, or hope?

Engagement. *Provides a natural stress reliever and a source of enjoyment.* Are there activities where you feel “in the zone”? Describe a time you felt completely absorbed in something.

Relationships. *Builds a support network, reducing isolation and loneliness.* Think about the people in your life who offer support and companionship. How do you feel in these relationships?

Meaning. *Acts as a guiding compass, providing strength during difficult times.* What gives you a sense of purpose? Are there causes or beliefs you hold that make your life feel valuable?

Accomplishment. *Boosts self-esteem and encourages a growth mindset.* Reflect on a recent goal you achieved. How did it feel? What are some achievements, big or small, that you are proud of?

Each day for a week, list three things you are grateful for, big or small. This could be as simple as enjoying a warm cup of coffee or spending time with a loved one.

Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	

Choose an activity you enjoy—such as drawing, reading, or exercising—and try doing it with full attention. Focus entirely on the activity, noticing any feelings, thoughts, or sensations that arise. Afterward, reflect on how this felt.

Describe the activity: _____

How did it feel to engage fully in this activity? _____

Identify one person you would like to connect with more deeply this week. Plan an activity or conversation to nurture this relationship.

Person: _____

Activity or conversation topic: _____

How did the interaction make you feel? _____

Write about a cause, value, or purpose that matters deeply to you. How does it contribute meaning to your life, and what actions could you take to support it?

Cause/Value/Purpose: _____

Why is it meaningful to you? _____

Actions to support it: _____

Choose a small, achievable goal that you can complete this week. It could be finishing a book, organizing a drawer, or reaching out to a friend.

Goal: _____

Deadline: _____

How did it feel to accomplish this goal? _____

Identify Growth Areas. Review your responses and identify one area in PERMA where you want to focus your attention. Write down an intention that you can incorporate in the coming weeks to improve your well-being. Explain what you will do.

Answer the following questions.

Which PERMA area surprised you the most?

How can small daily actions contribute to your long-term well-being?

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

Reference

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*. Atria Books.