

Toward an integrative applied positive psychology

Byron Lee

Introduction

Over the past 25 years I have been intimately involved in the world of individual and organisational change within a host of different settings and with people from all walks of life; and during this time in my various roles as counsellor, educator, coach, and facilitator, I have been privileged to see the amazing capacity for positive human change. My natural curiosity and love of learning has led me on a lifelong quest to better understand what it is that enables people to change: from simple behavioural adaptations to major life transformations; from a shift in attitude to learning a whole new set of skills. The scholarly endeavours of a host of dedicated researchers that have built up a significant body of knowledge has been impressive; there is such a wealth of material that it would go far beyond the scope of this chapter to fully explore and do justice to the richness that is a defining feature of the scholarship of personal and organisational change. However, within this chapter, based on my years of experience, reflections, conversations, and explorations, my desire is to contribute to the field of Applied Positive Psychology (APP) by offering a series of observations and questions about our awareness and understanding of human change, and more specifically, how different modes of change might shape the way positive psychology is applied in practice.

Importantly, within the field of applied positive psychology itself, we appear to be moving into a new phase of development. For example, the emergence of “Second wave positive psychology” (SWPP; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015) has provided a response to criticisms of early adopters of APP, recognising the need to consider both the positive and negative aspects of life, and so move towards a more balanced approach to what makes life worth living. These kind of developments open up exciting new possibilities, showing how APP can continue the movement toward real-world relevance and practice. To support this ongoing journey toward the practical application of wellbeing theories and constructs, APP will need to be equipped to respond to increasingly complex real world problems, and become a mature area of practice able to respond with nuanced strategies accessible and relevant to the wellbeing of an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Therefore, this chapter will also explore the ways applied positive psychology might develop in response to an ever changing world, and how broadening

the boundaries of current approaches to applying positive psychology might support the ongoing development of an inclusive and pluralistic applied positive psychology that can contribute to shaping a better world for all.

Positive psychology – an ongoing journey

The emergence of positive psychology as a way of addressing the negative bias of conventional psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) has shone a welcome spotlight on a rich and varied field of scholarship and practice over the past two decades; and there is every reason to imagine that positive psychology will continue to develop. A key question, though, is: how? The future development of positive psychology has recently been a topic of interest in many circles. For example, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2011), in articulating their thoughts on the future of positive psychology, highlighted three possibilities: the integration of positive psychology into the subdisciplines of psychology, such that positive psychology as a separate discipline dissolves as others embrace a balanced understanding of the positive and negative; the creation of a body of knowledge that is characterised by a unified single theory of human flourishing; or a future that emerges organically as we continue to attend to a shared positive purpose. Importantly, these authors also highlighted that the future of positive psychology is not something that can be decided in isolation; the question of how a positive psychology can contribute to an ever-evolving and changing world may play a crucial role in shaping its future. They conclude by suggesting that “the most desirable future of positive psychology will be a vibrant, rigorous science joined to the applied purpose of contributing in multiple ways to positive human development, and the increase of global well-being” (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2011, p. 8).

In its early stages, positive psychology was naturally concerned with establishing a distinct identity, which has to some extent resulted in a brief hiatus in embracing and building links and allies from different parts of the field of psychology and beyond. For example, as far back as 2006, Kirk Schneider argued from a humanistic psychological perspective that because positive psychology shared the same interests as humanistic psychology, namely to explore “what it means to be fully, experientially human, and how that understanding illuminates the vital or fulfilled life” (p. 1), positive psychology was a branch of humanistic psychology but with a narrower focus (Schneider, 2006). This suggestion has been resisted, and proponents of positive psychology have argued that although humanistic psychology and positive psychology may have common goals, their different worldviews, interests, and approaches mean that “adherents of the two perspectives would be best advised to pursue separately their shared desire to understand human potentials and wellbeing” (Waterman, 2013, p. 131).

Yet the question of the relationship between positive psychology and other branches of psychology, including those from the contemporary humanistic domain (comprising existential, humanistic, and transpersonal psychology), rather than being a peripheral conversation is, in my view, central to the maturation of positive psychology. For example, the criticism that positive psychology is too narrowly focused on the positive, and the contention that “a humanistically informed positive psychology would acknowledge the capacities of depression or anger or fear to distort, but it would also, and at the same time, recognize their capacities to clarify, liberate, and sensitize” (Schneider, 2006, p. 9), is beginning to motivate new developments within positive psychology. For example, Paul Wong, in an attempt to advocate a balanced definition of positive psychology, emphasised that positive psychology (PP)

needs to synthesize the positive and negative, take a clear stance on the imperative of virtues, integrate across levels of analysis, and build constituency with all branches of mainstream

psychology around the globe. . . . [to] shift the focus away from individual happiness and success to a meaning-centered approach to making life better for all people.

(Wong, 2011, p. 77)

Wong went on to suggest that PP, rather than being a distinct subdiscipline, needs to be an overarching approach for all positively oriented psychologists. His proposed PP 2.0 uses a dialectical, interactive, and dynamic dual-system perspective, which is attentive to context and to how positives and negatives interact to achieve the good life; which for his PP 2.0 is based on the four pillars of virtue, meaning, resilience, and wellbeing. Lomas and Ivtzan (2015) have called this emerging dialectic the “second wave” approach to positive psychology (SWPP), and argued that “SWPP is above all epitomized by a recognition of the fundamentally dialectical nature of wellbeing” (p. 1). This widening of the remit of positive psychology to include both the positive *and* the negative as part of the experience of a good life is to be welcomed as an important step toward a more nuanced approach to positive psychology.

Applied Positive Psychology

Positive psychology (PP) and Applied Positive Psychology (APP) have successfully stimulated a wealth of research and development across a wide range of different positive psychology constructs, along with establishing the effectiveness of a range of Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs; Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Positive psychology has also evolved from its initial idea as a way of addressing the negative bias of conventional psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) toward a more balanced view that considers not only what’s wrong with people, but also: What’s right with people? What makes life worth living? What brings happiness, meaning, and fulfillment?

An implicit function of any positive psychology approach or intervention is change. From a psychological perspective, change can be an introspective process or externally manifested. The desired goal of change may be characterised by cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, spiritual, and/or behavioural adjustments, or relational, group, and wider changes. And, whilst there is an ongoing debate within the field of positive psychology as to what constitutes positive change – or even whether change in a positive direction is always desirable or even beneficial (McNulty & Fincham, 2012) – one thing is for certain: Nothing is permanent, and everything changes. So a key principle within any framework or model that purports to advance positive psychology is that it has an effect and results in change, whether this be a map to help navigate the process of change or a process that itself facilitates change.

Interest in the field of applying positive psychology has naturally stimulated the exploration of concepts and ideas linked to human flourishing and wellbeing, and how these goals can be realised. For example, Linley and Joseph (2004) introduced the concept of Applied Positive Psychology (APP). By building on the principle that positive psychology offers a shared language and collective identity for researchers and practitioners interested in optimal human functioning, many of whose work preceded the formal launch of positive psychology into the public domain, they argued that APP was equipped to shift the balance toward offering scientific, user-friendly approaches to promoting wellbeing. Lomas, Hefferon, and Ivtzan (2014) have also advocated the use of the term APP to reflect the emergence of PP as praxis, or “practical action informed by theory” (Foster, 1986, p. 96). Lomas and colleagues defined APP as “the science and practice of improving wellbeing”; according to these authors, the core purpose of APP is to generate PPIs, which they defined as “theoretically grounded and empirically validated interventions, activities and recommendations to enhance wellbeing” (Lomas et al., 2014, p. ix). In short, an applied positive psychology is about how to contribute to positive change.

Expanding the scope of Applied Positive Psychology

The noble pursuit of empirically validated generalisable sources of happiness has, over the past 16 years, produced a rich vein of positive psychology literature that now fills our libraries, bookshelves, databases, and journals. Yet a maturing field of study and practice can also afford to broaden its horizons and embrace alternative models of scholarship and practice. For example, William Braud observed that:

Positive psychology continues to emphasize qualities within the realms of ego and, sometimes, of self actualization (with less attention to features beyond ego and features of self transcendence), and it tends to continue to approach its subject matter using positivistic research strategies (which emphasize quantitative, behavioral, and cognitive methods) rather than the more radical empiricist, pluralistic epistemology (which includes qualitative methods, experiential methods, and alternative modes of knowing) advocated by many transpersonal psychologists. *(Braud, 2006, p. 135)*

Whilst there are those who argue that positive psychology and humanistic psychology are best kept apart (e.g., Waterman, 2013), the risk is that by resisting the broadening of positive psychology's boundaries and developing working relationships beyond its natural epistemological allies, it may also fail to reflect contemporary approaches to addressing real-world problems, and ultimately become increasingly irrelevant. For example, Alrøe and Noe (2011) pointed out that "the mere production of specialised knowledge will not bring society to thrive and prosper; specialised knowledge needs to be communicated in such a way that it can be utilized, enter into democratic processes and decisions, and create societal value" (p. 152, citing Kastberg, 2007). Alrøe and Noe further highlighted the need to find ways to address the central paradox: that scientific advances lead to increased division between the constituent members of the scientific community and rising knowledge asymmetries. They also pointed out that all knowledge is perspectival, and that the nature, form, source, and presentation of this knowledge for each discipline or scientific community typically adhere to implicit and explicit philosophical and epistemological roots, such that perspectival knowledge asymmetries are inevitable and part of the natural maturation of scientific knowledge.

Alrøe and Noe's (2011) framework for second-order polyocular transdisciplinary communication is designed to be an alternative to engaging in the unresolvable debates and non-integrated multidisciplinary approaches to knowledge creation. These authors pointed out that second-order polyocular communication does not aim to combine or amalgamate different disciplines, nor create a single integrated perspective. Rather, it seeks to create a space for becoming aware of and managing knowledge asymmetries, where each discipline both shares and attends to the content and context of its own and each other's perspectival knowledge, in a manner somewhat akin to the allegory of six blind men exploring an elephant in a dark room. Thus, the challenge of living with increasing levels of *Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity*, or *VUCA* (Horney, Pasmore, & O'Shea, 2010), is in itself a wonderful opportunity for researchers and practitioners from across the different psychologies to engage in greater collaboration and sharing of ideas, and hence make a positive contribution to building a better world for all. The way forward is to create meaningful ways for a community of researchers and practitioners to work more closely together, an approach I describe as an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology.

Toward an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology

At its heart, a proposed Integrative Applied Positive Psychology is an approach that aims to provide the space for bringing together different approaches to positive change, able to respond

to the dynamic, complex, and diverse needs of individuals, workplaces, communities, and beyond. The proposition of an Integrative APP is that a polyocular framework can facilitate fruitful interactions between people, groups, and communities with differing perspectives and approaches, who can – under the right conditions and practical arrangements – collectively generate insights and responses that will enhance the wellbeing of people, communities, and the planet. Furthermore, by working collectively and cooperatively across traditional held boundaries, an integrative positive psychology may be well placed to respond to the complex challenges of today. Integrative Applied Positive Psychology (IAPP) also offers the possibility of combining different approaches for promoting wellbeing and facilitating change, a pragmatism that expands the choices of positive psychology interventions to include transparadigmatic approaches.

The foundations of an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology

The application of polyocular and metaperspectival frameworks in response to complexity is not a new idea. For example, Leong's integrative model of cross-cultural counselling is based on the theoretical tripartite framework of Kluckhohn and Murray (1950), and considers complexity theory to capture the complex and dynamic nature of cross-cultural client-counsellor interactions (Leong, 1996). Based on these theories, Leong proposed that within any client-practitioner relationship all three levels (i.e., universal, cultural, and individual) are interacting dynamically, and that it is “the principles of complexity that determine which level comes into the fore and becomes more relevant” (Leong, 1996, p. 203), further pointing to the need to go beyond static models of change to effectively respond to the dynamics of complex co-evolving human systems.

From the viewpoint of APP, the proposed integrative approach is intended to help navigate and respond to a VUCA world (Horney et al., 2010). Constant increases in interconnectedness and diversity, along with advances in technology, are the hallmark of the modern global community. In particular, Applied Positive Psychology needs to consider how it will respond to the kind of questions a VUCA world might raise for the future (see Table 21.1).

Table 21.1 Applied Positive Psychology in a VUCA World

<i>VUCA Challenge</i>	<i>Question for Applied Positive Psychology</i>
Volatility	Given that the nature, speed, size, and dynamics of change are themselves changeable, how do we develop Applied Positive Psychology interventions and approaches with the scope to accommodate the unexpected?
Uncertainty	Because it is not possible to predict with 100% certainty the effect of any specific intervention, how does an Applied Positive Psychology develop the kind of multiple feedback loops needed as part of an ongoing learning process, and how prepared is it to adapt to feedback?
Complexity	How does an Applied Positive Psychology support the development and the application of the metacognitive skills needed to observe the multifaceted, dynamic, and interconnected nature of different factors? And how can an APP be sufficiently flexible and creative in its approach as well as applying combinations of approaches to influence change in the desired direction?
Ambiguity	Given that there are multiple perspectives and viewpoints to any situation and change process, how does an Applied Positive Psychology work sensitively to support the individual client's/group's/system's meaning making processes?

With these questions in mind, the proposed Integrative APP framework extends horizons beyond the more familiar dialectic scientific theories of applied positive psychology to include theories and practices from dialogical and contemplative ways of knowing, and to move into territory that reflects the ideas emerging from the field of integral theory and integral consciousness (e.g., Murray, 2008). This is not an entirely new venture for APP. For example, the LIFE model of Lomas and colleagues (2014) is an impressive attempt at mapping concepts found within positive psychology onto Wilber's (2003) integral framework, and demonstrates the potential boundless scope of applied positive psychology. However, unlike the LIFE model, which offers a typology of possible approaches within the different quadrants and layers of an integral model, the proposed integrative APP framework is intended as a dynamic real-time iterative model designed to help positive psychology practitioners respond flexibly to different situations within different contexts and through an understanding of the value of different modes of change. The next section sets out the foundational principles of an integrative APP framework, before offering examples of how it is currently applied in practice.

The principles of Integrative Applied Positive Psychology

As previously highlighted, many branches of psychology share similar interests (e.g., humanistic and positive psychology). Whilst paradigmatic differences and differing research traditions – for example, humanistic psychology's inclination for qualitative (Fischer, 2006) and positive psychology's for quantitative research (Ong & Dulmen, 2007) – may continue to form a natural dividing line, there is a fundamental and very practical reason why future APP needs to embrace approaches that go beyond a one-dimensional reductionist approach to respond to different modes of learning or change within real-world contexts.

To illustrate this point, let us consider three different modes of learning and change: *adaptive*, *generative*, and *transformative*. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into a detailed exploration of these approaches. However, the work of Argyris and Schön (1996) on single-, double-, and triple-loop learning highlights the importance of all three learning processes in theory, research, and practice. Adaptive learning is a single-loop process that enables individuals or organisations to maintain their status quo or achieve their objectives by adapting or modifying behaviour. Generative learning, a double-loop process, is proactive and purposeful learning and involves adopting new skills, knowledge, or behaviours. Learning and change involves asking questions, challenging assumptions, seeking different perspectives, evaluating alternatives, and reflecting on actions (Van der Vegt & Bunderson, 2005). Transformative learning is a triple-loop process that involves a fundamental shift in perspective; unlike the incremental nature of adaptive learning, or the creativity of generative learning, transformative learning entails a disorientation-reorientation process and a wholesale shift in perspective, direction, or even identity (Kasl & Elias, 1997; Peschl, 2007). It is also holistic, inviting the whole person – mind, body, and spirit – to engage in the learning process (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006).

By noting that adaptive learning is characterised by logical deductive reasoning and concentration, generative learning is associated with intuition and attention, and transformative learning is related with contemplation and consciousness, it is possible to observe the kind of learning approaches most suited to different aspects of APP. For example, the dialectic quality of discussion associated with adaptive learning presupposes that learning – and, hence, change – is an incremental process and operates in a closed system. And whilst it may not be possible to always accurately predict the size or even the direction of change, the conscious or unconscious assimilation of new knowledge within adaptive systems leads to purposeful adaptations and learning with the intention of making progress toward a desired outcome. Importantly, the underlying

assumption of the dialectic approach to learning is that change occurs through the transfer and acquisition of new knowledge, the predominant role of positive psychology research in this case being the generation of this new knowledge to be applied in practice.

However, because human systems are complex and diverse, it is not always possible to reliably predict the effect of an intervention in any given context. The emphasis on adaptive change and the concentration of research efforts on causal relationships can inadvertently exclude alternative strategies for learning and change within the mainstream of applied positive psychology, such as generative and transformative approaches. For example, because generative, or dialogical, learning and change is characterized by an absence of previous knowledge, it is most useful where the past is not a reliable predictor of the future. Generative learning and change is a more spontaneous process, closely associated with creative dialogues – specifically, asking questions, exploring alternatives, challenging assumptions, reflecting, and constructing new ways of approaching the situation (Sessa, London, Pingor, Gullu, & Patel, 2011) – where intuitions, or “affectively charged judgments that arise through rapid, nonconscious, and holistic associations” (Dane & Pratt, 2007, p. 40), play an important role in the choice of interventions (Dane & Pratt, 2009). It is worth noting that positive psychology advocates are not adverse to encouraging dialogical or generative approaches to positive change, such as Appreciative Inquiry (Troxel, 2002), where dialogical knowledge co-evolves through shared narratives within the conversations and stories of lived experiences, and change occurs as part of our shared human experience and the focus of our conversations. Generative learning is based on principle of dialogue rather than discussion, where “dialogue is an attempt to perceive the world through new eyes, not merely to solve problems using the thought that created them in the first instance” (Isaacs, 1993, p. 30). Significantly, knowledge in itself impedes generative learning (Bohm, 1980).

Transformative learning is a deep learning process that enables us to question the very basis of our constructed worldviews. Whilst it has yet to be embraced as a mode of change within applied positive psychology, its potential as an alternative strategy for change is significant. For example, whilst the role of the educator within adaptive learning is to introduce a validated new piece of knowledge or ~~skill, within~~ generative learning it is to facilitate a dialogical inquiry toward a desired ~~outcome~~. The educator’s function within transformative learning is to be an “empathetic provocateur” (Cranton, 1992, p. 17), aiming to promote critical self-reflection and help learners to take positive action. It is also to be someone who can “hold the space,” to enable deeper introspection and insight. Transformative change requires humility, a letting go of knowing, and a willingness to be with our vulnerability, so that we may become immersed with the object of our contemplation and move toward transformation, illumination, and insight (Zajonc, 2006).

From a developmental perspective, transformative change shifts us from a reliance on surface knowledge toward developing wisdom through deeper contemplative practices. As Tom Murray (2008, p. 12) highlighted, “As experiences become more diverse and complex, and as life situations become more complex and demanding, the mind is challenged to create ever higher orders of self-organization and meaning.”

Integrative Applied Positive Psychology in practice

Although the proposed IAPP is a novel framework, the essential ingredients of an integrative approach to supporting individual, collective, and systemic change have been central to my personal and professional learning and development, and have informed and guided my practice in the field of personal and organisational development for the past 25 years. In my work as a counsellor, teacher, facilitator, consultant, or coach, I feel fortunate to have been gifted with a

rich array of experiences to draw upon in working in multiple settings and with a diverse mix of people. Here, I share three case studies that demonstrate adaptive, generative, and transformative change processes in practice. The aim is to illustrate how these different approaches can facilitate positive change; when and in what circumstances adaptive, generative, or transformative change approaches can best be applied; and the kinds of outcome these forms of change can lead to.

An adaptive approach to increasing wellbeing

Because coaching and positive psychology are both founded on the assumption that people have the potential to flourish and grow, they are natural allies (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007), and one-to-one coaching offers a wealth of examples of how adaptive change can be applied in practice. Typically in coaching, a clear need, goal, or objective is articulated, and coaching interventions are informed by the coach's training and knowledge. For example, I recently met with a manager who came for coaching to help build her resilience at work and to communicate more effectively with her team. We worked to translate her general aims into a series of specific measurable personal objectives. Based on these objectives, together we explored various ways in which she could meet her goals by applying predetermined wellbeing- and relationship-enhancing interventions. For example, she set herself a clear action plan to increase her physical activity to boost her resilience, and to identify ways to enhance her working relationships using the Vital Friends approach developed by Rath (2006). Over a period of several months, this client reported feeling more energised and able to stay focused when under pressure at work. Her work colleagues reported a positive change in their working relationship with her, and overall she was feeling happier about life. Importantly from an adaptive change perspective, she was able to show significant progress toward her stated personal objectives. So, in this example of adaptive positive change, specific predetermined interventions were applied to support the manager to achieve clear stated objectives.

Generative approach to improving team relationships

Where there is uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity, and/or volatility within a situation, a generative learning approach offers a more flexible approach to change. The collaborative, co-evolving, and dynamic nature of this approach requires a different set of skills, moving from someone with expert knowledge to a practitioner able to facilitate an open inquiry toward a positive outcome. I introduced this way of working whilst supporting a team who wanted to improve how they worked together and alongside other departments in the context of a large organisation. Team members enjoyed working for the organisation and it was a successful business. So the desire to improve their performance was part of an ongoing organisational development strategy. They had a clear shared sense of direction, or vision for the future, but had neither clear objectives nor a plan of action.

We spent time in open conversation, sharing and exploring together. And unlike the adaptive synthesis often found in group discussion, the expansive nature of the open group dialogue – typical of the generative change process – enabled the group to explore, learn, and grow together, dialogue itself being an important part of the change process. This team were, in fact, embarking together on an Appreciative Inquiry, aimed at improving working relationships and collectively creating new possibilities that positively altered their shared futures (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). This scenario was typical of the kind of situation that is suited to generative change because – unlike adaptive change strategies that introduce predetermined interventions – generative strategies evolve and respond to more nuanced needs of individuals, groups, or

organisations. And because generative change views human relationships as living systems that respond to and co-evolve through conversation and dialogue, it offers a way of introducing incremental change in a desired direction, with feedback loops in the form of ongoing dialogue providing the necessary information to help navigate toward a desired overall goal.

Transformative approach to compassion

Central to transformative learning is the contemplation of the foundational assumptions that underpin the meanings attributed to concepts, attitudes, actions, and outcomes. In my experience, the introspective nature of this process provides the vehicle for a fundamental re-visioning of the very nature of the subject of our contemplation, namely change arising as part of action-orientated insight.

I have witnessed at first hand the liberating and positive effect of transformative learning and change. I recall supporting a very experienced lecturer who had been stunned by feedback from a student who had expressed concerns about his ethics and accused him of discrimination. The principles of fairness, equality, respect, and justice were at his core, and he arrived at our first meeting wanting to reassert his values and better understand how this student had misunderstood his actions. As our time together progressed, I offered him the chance to explore his thoughts and feelings more deeply through a mindful contemplation. By entering into a quiet contemplative space, he was invited to gently connect with vulnerability, to engage in a process of deeper learning through an evolving compassionate critical consciousness. What arose, to his surprise, was an emergent sense of *compassion*. Compassion for himself and for the student. Knowing that compassion enables us to become aware of suffering, to feel empathic concern for those who are suffering, and then to take action to alleviate that suffering (Kanov et al., 2004), the lecturer, through the contemplative process, understood at a deeper level that he needed to remain connected with his discomfort as part of the change process; and by gently guiding him to bring his attention into intimate partnership with his experience, his openness to not knowing and his vulnerability enabled him to move toward greater insight. By bringing his awareness to his unconscious bias through self-inquiry, he understood the need to be vigilant and responsive to power imbalances in unequal power relationships, and act with greater cultural humility toward his students (Tervalon, 2003).

Within transformative change we see how it is to “go through some pain” to fully appreciate deeper levels of meaning and growth. This also reflects one of the principles found in Wong’s (2011) proposed Positive Psychology 2.0 matrix, namely that a negative experience may be a necessary part of the journey toward a positive outcome.

A flexible framework for positive change

Providing options for change within the context of positive psychology offers the practitioner flexibility in how best to respond to different scenarios and different needs (Table 21.2). It also offers the possibility of moving from one form of change to another or even working with multiple modes of change simultaneously.

This is a tentative first attempt at setting out how each of these processes might operate within a framework for an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology. By embracing a wider reservoir of approaches born from alternative knowledge traditions, integrative applied positive psychology may enable practitioners to flexibly apply critical thinking, intuitive inquiry, and contemplative insights in response to emerging individual, group, institutional, and community needs. An important ongoing question for an integrative applied positive psychology is how

Table 21.2 Modes of Change for an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology

<i>Mode</i>	<i>Adaptive</i>	<i>Generative</i>	<i>Transformative</i>
Theoretical orientation	Biomechanical metaphor Reductionism Deductive	Growth metaphor Constructivism Dialogical	Metamorphosis metaphor Radical-political/holistic Emancipatory
Knowledge or understanding	Dialectic knowledge is the basis of determining interventions for change	Knowledge emerges through collaborative inquiry	Knowledge is based on uncovering power dynamics and systems insight
Evidence base	Facts and data	Stories and experiences	Symbolic representation of consciousness/body awareness
Neuropsychological orientation	Logic	Intuition	Insight
Assumptions about positive change	Change arising from positive adaptation through application of an intervention	A co-produced, iterative, intuitive, dynamic process emerging via simultaneous inquiry, action, and evaluation	Disorientation – reorientation through fundamental questioning of underpinning assumptions of status quo, enabling freedom and action
Approach to change	Evidence based incremental approach to change via the use of validated interventions	Dialogical creative approach and “process as change”	Critical consciousness, contemplative insights, questioning assumptions, and activism
The role of change agent	To apply interventions	To facilitate collaborative inquiry and cooperative action	To stimulate radical reflective and holistic reflexive processes
The outcome of positive change	Replication of outcome from previous application of intervention	Movement toward desired outcomes/goals	Paradigmatic or radical shift in understanding and action
Measuring positive outcomes	Evaluation against predetermined measures associated with intervention	Movement toward desired outcomes and experiences of people involved in the process	Authentic presence and internal positive values/behaviour alignment
Timeframe of change	Interventions can be applied quickly; however, the development of validated interventions via reductionist research methods can take time	Change begins as soon as process begins (dialogue) and is a continuous process	Timeframe for change is unpredictable and cannot easily be predetermined
Scope of mode of change	Applicable for simple and complicated individual, group, and systems change processes	Applicable for complex individual, group, and systems change processes	Applicable for wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973)
Examples of positive change interventions and practices	<i>Empirically validated interventions:</i> Gratitude letter (Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller, 2009) Physical activity (Hefferon & Mutrie, 2012) Random acts of kindness (Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui, & Fredrickson, 2006) Self-compassion practices (Germer & Neff, 2013)	<i>Generative processes:</i> Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001) World Café (Fouché, & Light, 2011) Participative Appreciative Action and Reflection (Chayé et al., 2008) Sensemaking (Rutledge, 2009)	<i>Contemplative practices:</i> Contemplation (Zajonc, 2006) Critical consciousness (Berila, 2015) Seeing suffering (Lee, 2016) Focusing (Gendlin, 2003) Journaling (Butcher, 2004)

best to determine which approach to change is most suitable for this person, group, or community, for this situation, in this context, to achieve these desired outcomes? When and how should we shift between different paradigms? How might we work within multiple paradigms simultaneously?

Developing an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology

The purpose of creating an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology is both to offer a framework for positive change and to stimulate an ongoing conversation about the future of APP and its relevance to real world change beyond the academic arena. The transparadigmatic framework opens up exciting opportunities, unbounded by methodological convention or professional concords. At its heart is a desire to create a spaciousness that gives rise to the freedom needed if individual and communities are to grow and thrive, with critical feedback, generative conversations, and introspective insights each playing a part in the natural co-evolution of the framework into multiple new ways for positive change. It is also hopeful. The impulse for happiness, whatever that might mean, is strong and enduring. And whilst there may be many differences in how we define and find happiness, it remains an important part of the journey of creating a better world for all.

From a practical perspective, because current approaches to change within APP tend to be based on the scientific – dialectic view of the world, I anticipate that the scope of an Integrative Applied Positive Psychology may initially be limited. This is not because it does not have relevance, but rather because the asymmetrical exposure to the different theories and practices will mean that many positive psychology researchers and practitioners will be unfamiliar with the different forms of knowing and change. It may also be reasonable to speculate that working with complexity and transparadigmatically will require a particular set of capabilities that are not yet part of mainstream APP education, such as:

- 1 intrapersonal awareness of one's own worldview, assumptions, and thought processes;
- 2 capacity for emotional regulation;
- 3 capacity for cognitive complexity and reflexivity;
- 4 flexibility, including the ability to hold multiple perspectives, paradoxes, and ambiguity in awareness;
- 5 capacity to expand meaning-making through metaperspectivism;
- 6 a critical consciousness and awareness of systems dynamics.

One promising line of development is that the capacity to work with multiple paradigms and the ability to simultaneously observe multiple perspectives from alternative paradigms can be facilitated through the development of mindfulness, the insight that emerges through purposeful present-moment awareness (see Kabat-Zinn, 1982, Langer, 1989). The ability of mindfulness to support the gentle holding of multiple perspectives, paradoxes, and ambiguities in consciousness, and to navigate between multiple paradigms non-reactively and responsively, has the potential to enable positive psychology practitioners to be aware of, and shift approach in tune with, the nature of the context and presenting needs.

Concluding thoughts

A framework that seeks to directly engage with the most pressing issues of today, by promoting greater collective engagement, synergy, and action, has the potential to bring together a rich and diverse array of people, worldviews, ideas, and practices in the hope of collectively assembling

a positive way forward for all. It also opens up the possibility of building bridges and forming stronger bonds within the psychology community and beyond, our sense of shared humanity and interconnectedness in itself providing the space needed to transform the dream of a flourishing peaceful world into a reality, modelled by the very people wishing to lead the way. “Be the change you want to see in the world” is a phrase most often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi: It calls to us as a community of applied positive psychology practitioners to pave the way toward creating a flourishing world in our intentions and actions, and embracing creative ways of working together for the benefit of all.

References

- Alrøe, H. F., & Noe, E. (2011). The paradox of scientific expertise: A perspectivist approach to knowledge asymmetries. *Fachsprache – International Journal of Specialized Communication*, *34*, 152–167.
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Berila, B. (2015). *Integrating mindfulness into anti-oppression pedagogy: Social justice in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Biswas-Diener, R., & Dean, B. (2007). *Positive psychology coaching: Putting the science of happiness to work for your clients*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the implicate order*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bolier, L., Haverman, M., Westerhof, G. J., Riper, H., Smit, F., & Bohlmeijer, E. (2013). Positive psychology interventions: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled studies. *BMC Public Health*, *13*, 119. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-13-119>
- Braud, W. (2006). Educating the “more” in holistic transpersonal higher education: A 30+ year perspective on the approach of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, *38*, 133–158.
- Butcher, H. K. (2004). Written expression and the potential to enhance knowing participation in change. *Visions: The Journal of Rogerian Nursing Science*, *12*(1), 37–50.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative Inquiry in organizational life. In R. W. Woodman & W. A. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in organizational change and development* (Vol. 1, pp. 129–169). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2001). A positive revolution in change: Appreciative Inquiry. In D. L. Cooperrider, P. F. Sorenson, Jr., T. F. Yeager, & D. Whitney (Eds.), *Appreciative Inquiry: An emerging direction for organization development* (pp. 9–29). Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- Cranton, P. A. (1992). *Working with adult learners*. Toronto, ON: Wall & Emerson.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Nakamura, J. (2011). Positive psychology: Where did it come from, where is it going? In K. M. Sheldon, T. B. Kashdan, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 2–9). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Dane, E., & Pratt, M. G. (2007). Exploring intuition and its role in managerial decision-making. *Academy of Management Review*, *32*, 33–54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2007.23463682>
- Dane, E., & Pratt, M. G. (2009). Conceptualizing and measuring intuition: A review of recent trends. *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *24*, 1–40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9780470745267.ch1>
- Dirkx, J. M., Mezirow, J., & Cranton, P. (2006). Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning: A dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education*, *4*, 123–139. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1541344606287503>
- Fischer, C. (2006). Humanistic psychology and qualitative research: Affinity, clarifications, and invitations. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, *34*, 3–11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15473333thp3401_2
- Foster, W. (1986). A critical perspective on administration and organization in education. In K. A. Sirotnik & J. Oakes (Eds.), *Critical perspectives on the organization and improvement of schooling* (pp. 95–129). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-4229-5_2

- Fouché, C., & Light, G. (2011). An invitation to dialogue: “The World Café” in social work research. *Qualitative Social Work, 10*, 28–48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1473325010376016>
- Froh, J. J., Kashdan, T. B., Ozminkowski, K. M., & Miller, N. (2009). Who benefits the most from a gratitude intervention in children and adolescents? Examining positive affect as a moderator. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 4*, 408–422. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760902992464>
- Gendlin, E. T. (2003). *Focusing: How to gain direct access to your body's knowledge*. London, England: Random House.
- Germer, C. K., & Neff, K. D. (2013). Self-compassion in clinical practice. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 69*, 856–867. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22021>
- Ghaye, T., Melander-Wikman, A., Kisare, M., Chambers, P., Bergmark, U., Kostenius, C., & Lillyman, S. (2008). Participatory and Appreciative Action and Reflection (PAAR) – Democratizing reflective practices. *Reflective practice, 9*, 361–397. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623940802475827>
- Hefferon, K., & Mutrie, N. (2012). Physical activity as a “stellar” positive psychology intervention. In E. O. Acevedo (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of exercise psychology* (pp. 117–130). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Horney, N., Pasmore, B., & O’Shea, T. (2010). Leadership agility: A business imperative for a VUCA world. *People and Strategy, 33*(4), 32–38.
- Isaacs, W. N. (1993). Dialogue, collective thinking, and organizational learning. *Organizational Dynamics, 22*(2), pp. 24–39. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(93\)90051-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(93)90051-2)
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1982). An outpatient program in behavioral medicine for chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: Theoretical considerations and preliminary results. *General Hospital Psychiatry, 4*, 33–47. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343\(82\)90026-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343(82)90026-3)
- Kanov, J. M., Maitlis, S., Worline, M. C., Dutton, J. E., Frost, P. J., & Lilius, J. M. (2004). Compassion in organizational life. *American Behavioral Scientist, 47*, 808–827. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002764203260211>
- Kasl, E., & Elias, D. (1997). Transformative learning in action: A case study. *ReVision, 20*, 20–27.
- Kastberg, P. (2007). Knowledge communication – The emergence of a third order discipline. In C. Viliger & H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast (Eds.), *Kommunikation in Bewegung: Multimedialer und multilingualer Wissenstransfer in der Experten-Laien-Kommunikation [Communication in action: Multimedia and multilingual knowledge transfer in communication between experts and laypeople]* (pp. 7–24). Berlin, Germany: Peter Lang.
- Kluckhohn, C., & Murray, H. A. (1950). Personality formation: The determinants. In C. Kluckhohn & H. A. Murray (Eds.), *Personality in nature, society, and culture* (pp. 35–48). New York, NY: Knopf.
- Langer, E. J. (1989). *Mindfulness*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Lee, B. (2016). A mindful path to cultural diversity. In M. A. Chapman-Clarke (Ed.), *Mindfulness in the workplace: An evidence-based approach to improving wellbeing and maximizing performance* (pp. 266–287). London, England: Kogan Page.
- Leong, F. (1996). Toward an integrative model for cross-cultural counseling and psychotherapy. *Applied and Preventive Psychology, 5*, 189–209. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849\(96\)80012-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849(96)80012-6)
- Linley, P. A., & Joseph, S. (2004). Toward a theoretical foundation for positive psychology in practice. In P. A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 713–731). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Lomas, T., Hefferon, K., & Ivtzan, I. (2014). *Applied positive psychology: Integrated positive practice*. London, England: SAGE.
- Lomas, T., & Ivtzan, I. (2015). Second wave positive psychology: Exploring the positive – negative dialectics of wellbeing. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*, 1753–1768. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9668-y>
- McNulty, J. K., & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Beyond positive psychology? Toward a contextual view of psychological processes and well-being. *American Psychologist, 67*, 101–110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0024572>
- Murray, T. (2008, August). *Exploring epistemic wisdom: Ethical and practical implications of integral theory and methodological pluralism for collaboration and knowledge-building*. Paper presented at the First Biannual Integral Theory Conference, John F. Kennedy University, Pleasant Hill, CA.
- Ong, A., & Dulmen, M. H. M. (Eds.). (2007). *Oxford handbook of methods in positive psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7*, 361–375. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10902-005-3650-z>

- Peschl, M. F. (2007). Triple-loop learning as foundation for profound change, individual cultivation, and radical innovation: Construction processes beyond scientific and rational knowledge. *Constructivist Foundations*, 2, 136–145.
- Rath, T. (2006). *Vital friends: The people you can't afford to live without*. New York, NY: Gallup Press.
- Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4, 155–169. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/bf01405730>
- Rutledge, M. (2009). Sensemaking as a tool in working with complexity. *OD Practitioner*, 41(2), 19–24.
- Schneider, K. (2006, August). *Toward a humanistic positive psychology: Why can't we just get along?* Paper presented at the 114th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5–14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5>
- Sessa, V. I., London, M., Pingor, C., Gullu, B., & Patel, J. (2011). Adaptive, generative, and transformative learning in project teams. *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 17, 146–167. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13527591111143691>
- Sin, N. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). Enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms with positive psychology interventions: A practice-friendly meta-analysis. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 65, 467–487. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20593>
- Tervalon, M. (2003). Components of culture in health for medical students' education. *Academic Medicine*, 78, 570–576. <http://dx.doi.org/>
- Troxel, J. P. (2002). *Appreciative Inquiry: An action research method for organizational transformation and its implications to the practice of group process facilitation* (Unpublished working paper). Chicago, IL: Millennia Consulting, LLC. Retrieved from <https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/ai/uploads/Troxel%20Appreciative%20Inquiry8-02.doc>
- Van der Vegt, G. S., & Bunderson, J. S. (2005). Learning and performance in multidisciplinary teams: The importance of collective team identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48, 532–547. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2005.17407918>
- Waterman, A. S. (2013). The humanistic psychology – positive psychology divide: Contrasts in philosophical foundations. *American Psychologist*, 68, 124–133. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0032168>
- Wilber, K. (2003). Introduction to integral theory and practice. *Integral Naked*, 2004.
- Wong, P. T. P. (2011). Positive psychology 2.0: Towards a balanced interactive model of the good life. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 52, 69–81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0022511>
- Zajonc, A. (2006). Love and knowledge: Recovering the heart of learning through contemplation. *The Teachers College Record*, 108, 1742–1759.