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## Positive Psychology and Work-Life Integration: The Mutually Satisfying Relationship

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## Positive Psychology and Work-Life Integration: The Mutually Satisfying Relationship

### Abstract

Positive psychology is the empirical study of what makes life worth living, an exploration of human flourishing. Work-life integration is a holistic approach to living that enables people to create wins across varying life domains. The author suggests that positive psychology and work-life integration are mutually satisfying fields of study. This paper outlines specific recommendations for how positive psychology theory and research can contribute to an individual's success in effectively integrating work and life. In turn, the process of improving work-life integration may enhance an individual's ability to live a flourishing life. Possible implications for this work include future empirical testing of the recommendations made in this paper to determine their validity and reliability and the scientific exploration of specific connections that can be made between positive psychology and work-life integration.

Positive Psychology and Work-Life Integration: The Mutually Satisfying Relationship

Katharine E. Comtois

University of Pennsylvania

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Applied Positive Psychology

Advisor: Stewart D. Friedman

August 1, 2012

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Capstone Project

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Positive psychology is the empirical study of what makes life worth living, an exploration of human flourishing. Work-life integration is a holistic approach to living that enables people to create wins across varying life domains. The author suggests that positive psychology and work-life integration are mutually satisfying fields of study. This paper outlines specific recommendations for how positive psychology theory and research can contribute to an individual's success in effectively integrating work and life. In turn, the process of improving work-life integration may enhance an individual's ability to live a flourishing life. Possible implications for this work include future empirical testing of the recommendations made in this paper to determine their validity and reliability and the scientific exploration of specific connections that can be made between positive psychology and work-life integration.

## **Introduction**

From the outside looking in, Emily appeared to have it all: a challenging and promising career, a supportive spouse, two beautiful young boys, a gorgeous home in a desirable neighborhood, and an incredibly close knit group of friends. She managed to make time to accomplish a ton every day. She would wake up at 4 a.m. to get to the gym before her boys woke up, get home in time to eat breakfast with them, head to work for the day, and return home just before the boys' bedtime. The next day she would do it all again. Her friends thought she was superhuman, but Emily was barely holding it all together. Appearances can be misleading. If you had the opportunity to talk to Emily, she would openly report that she was overwhelmed, exhausted, and sad. She felt out of control of her life, and did not feel that she was succeeding in any one area. She was hoping to find some kind of *balance*, but she was not sure how she could manage to fulfill all of her responsibilities any other way. Emily was trying to figure out what a flourishing life might look like for her, but she did not know where to begin.

## **Positive Psychology**

Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life worth living, the empirical exploration of how people flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Historically, the field of psychology has concentrated on healing human pathology within a disease model of psychological functioning. Alternatively, positive psychology focuses on subjective experiences contributing to the good life, positive individual traits, and institutions that enable both. The positive psychology movement was born in 1998 when Martin E. P. Seligman served as the President of the American Psychological Association and reminded its members that psychology

is not only the study of pathology but also the study of strength and virtue (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Traditional psychology places an emphasis on fixing what appears to be broken with the human psyche, whereas positive psychology highlights the importance of nurturing what works well (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). To complement the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* used to diagnose mental illness, Peterson and Seligman (2004) wrote a classification handbook intended to identify universal human character strengths and virtues. Establishing a language for the positive individual traits that contribute to human flourishing enabled researchers and practitioners alike to devise assessment strategies intended to measure strengths. Positive interventions started being developed, and that work continues today. Positive interventions are evidence-based, intentional acts that are designed to increase well-being by enhancing that which causes human flourishing (J. O. Pawelski, course lecture, September 8, 2011).

The fundamental premise of positive psychology is that happiness is not merely the absence of unhappiness (J. O. Pawelski, course lecture, September 8, 2011). To live the good life, one must not only focus less on what he doesn't value, but one must also focus more on what he does value. Positive interventions enable individuals to do just that. All positive interventions require first a commitment to change and then repeated action; they are not solely activities in which people can engage on autopilot. Successful positive interventions require not only the belief that lasting positive change is possible, but also the commitment to creating the desired change through self-determination and self-regulation. For some people, creating change is harder than it is for others. People approach life change from their own unique perspectives,

equipped with diverse resources. Positive interventions rely on one's hope for a different future and provide the mechanism to create change through goal oriented behaviors. There is no magic pill that one can take to improve overall well-being; there is no magic thought that one can think to improve well-being. This goal requires work that involves the whole self. Positive interventions do not solely involve the mind, but they are instead integrative in nature.

### **Work-Life Integration**

As a psychotherapist and coach, I often see clients just like Emily who are struggling to find more balance in their lives. Many of the stories are similar: work takes too much time away from being with one's family, or managing work and family demands does not allow any time to take care of oneself. A common goal that people yearn to realize is to strike some sort of balance between work and the rest of their lives. Work-life balance as we understand it often requires that people make trade offs, compromising satisfaction in one or more area(s) of their lives to fulfill their responsibilities in another. Unfortunately, compromising in this way can leave people feeling inauthentic, disconnected, and stressed (Friedman, 2008). Friedman (2008) proposed an alternative approach with his model of work-life integration, and suggested that the most effective leaders purposefully integrate work, home, community and self. In doing so, the best leaders identify the potential that each aspect of their lives has to generate successes in the others. A leader is defined as any individual who is interested in being the agent of his own life, actively engaging in what matters most to make it a richer life (Friedman, 2008). This is the definition for a leader that will be used for the purposes of this paper. According to Morris and Madsen (2007), "integrated individuals have greater opportunity for coherence, unity, fulfillment, happiness, maturity, health, and wellness" (p. 444), because they do not compromise

their values for the sake of any one area in their lives. I believe that by effectively integrating all life domains, individuals can be empowered to live flourishing lives.

Friedman (2008) outlines an approach to leadership that emphasizes the importance of creating four-way wins at work, home, community and self when making decisions in any one domain. Creating four-way wins requires an exploration of how the different aspects of life connect and relate to each other. The challenge then is to identify opportunities in one's life where mutual gains across domains can be created and realized. According to Friedman (2008), producing four-way wins is possible for anyone who is willing to practice *being real*, *being whole*, and *being innovative*. *Being real* means acting with authenticity. A truly authentic individual knows what is important to him and behaves accordingly. *Being whole* means acting with integrity. The whole person sees his life as a system, recognizing how his life domains both work together and differ from each other. *Being Innovative* means acting with creativity. An innovative individual experiments with his behavior to most effectively and confidently adjust to new circumstances (Friedman, 2008). When combined, being real, whole, and innovative not only serves leaders well in their efforts to be better leaders, but I believe this combination can also help individuals to enhance their well-being.

Being real, whole, and innovative, need not come naturally in one's efforts to effectively integrate their lives, for there are ways that people can learn to become better at any or all of these practices (Friedman, 2008). There are six identified leadership skills for each area that contributes to an individual's success in acting with authenticity, integrity, and creativity. An individual may choose to take the *My Total Leadership Skills* (Total Leadership Inc., 2008) assessment to help determine what skills may need some strengthening in one's efforts to



optimize work-life integration. The next section of this paper outlines the 18 leadership skills contributing to optimal integration and offers two recommendations per skill for how to strengthen each. These recommendations serve as positive interventions to improve one's work-life integration. The field of positive psychology places a heavy emphasis on the scientific nature of its approach to psychological well-being, differentiating itself from the growing self-help movement. Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, and Minhas (2011) acknowledge that positive psychology practitioners need not limit their repertoire of positive interventions to those that have been empirically supported to date, for there are so few empirically validated tools at this time. Instead, Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) suggest that practitioners leverage both positive psychology science and theory in the creation and application of positive interventions, assuming that those based on theory will be empirically validated in the future. Some of the recommendations made in this paper to improve work-life integration are founded on empirical research while others are based on theory.

### **Recommendations and Literature Review**

To live a fully integrated life, Friedman (2008) suggests that leaders invest their efforts in being real, being whole, and being innovative. This paper offers recommendations for how individuals can strengthen specific skills leading to an improved ability to be real, whole, and innovative. An individual may choose to take the *My Total Leadership Skills* (Total Leadership Inc., 2008) assessment to identify specific skills in need of strengthening. As outlined by Total Leadership, Inc. (2008), there are six skills for each area: being real, being whole, and being innovative (see Appendix for complete list of skills without recommendations), and this section

outlines two recommendations for each skill. Immediately following each recommendation is a review of the literature that was used in its development.

## **Be Real**

### **Leadership skill #1: Aligns actions with values**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a specific goal that you will pursue that (a) you believe is an important goal to have because it aligns with your values *and* (b) provides you with interest and enjoyment. Be careful not to identify a goal that someone else wants you to pursue, or that your situation demands of you.**

In consideration of personal goals, Csikszentmihalyi (1993) defines a good goal as one that is harmonious with an individual's sense of self and that leverages purposeful activity leading to the satisfaction of unique and personal desires. According to Brown and Ryan (2004) and self-determination theory, actions that are aligned with an individual's interests and values are considered to be intrinsically motivated and autonomously regulated. The self-concordance model of goal setting describes the extent to which an individual's stated goals align with that individual's enduring interests and values (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Self-concordance begins at goal selection, assuming some individuals choose goals that are not necessarily representative of their core values but are instead driven by what they believe they should or ought to pursue. In their study, Sheldon and Elliot (1999) identified self-concordant goals as those that participants thought were really important goals to have and those that provided fun and enjoyment. They found that individuals who pursued self-concordant goals put more effort into their goal oriented activities, met better goal achievement, and experienced enhanced well-being than those whose

activities did not reflect their core interests and values. In another study, Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan (2000) defined identified goals as those that were “interesting or not, you felt that it expressed your true values” and intrinsic goals as “you did it purely for the interest and enjoyment in doing it” (p. 424). Recommendation #1 combines both measures to help individuals to identify goals that are intrinsically motivated, and therefore aligned with their values. As a result, it is hypothesized that by creating goals that are driven by the participant’s personal values, his actions in pursuit of those goals will also be in alignment with his values.

**Recommendation # 2: Find a partner to help you with this exercise. Have your partner think of something that he does not really want to do in his life, but that he *wants* to want to do. (For example, your partner might not want to run daily because it is hard, but to become healthier he might *want* to want to run daily.) Have your partner rate on a scale of -10 to +10 how much he wants to do the thing he selected (i.e. -8: really don’t want to run). Then, ask your partner what he would need to focus on to make him want to do the thing more (i.e. improving my fitness so I can play with my kids). Reiterating that focus, as your partner what else he can focus on to increase his desire (i.e. reducing my blood pressure, so I can live longer). Continue this line of questioning until your partner gets close as possible to +10. Now, switch roles and have your partner lead you through this exercise with something that you do not really want to do, but that you *want* to want to do.**

The “want what you want to want” exercise is intended to assist an individual to cultivate his voluntary attention to better align his desires with his values (J. O. Pawelski, course lecture, November 20, 2011). James (1981) argues that what is meant by “will” is the ability to direct and

to sustain attention. Therefore, if an individual desires to act in better alignment with his values, then he needs to master the ability to sustain focus on those values. According to James (1981), action results from an idea that is held stable in the mind. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) defines optimal experience by what he dubbed as a state of flow. An individual experiences flow “when the information that keeps coming into awareness is congruent with goals” (p. 39). Experiencing flow requires disciplined concentration. Yet, when an individual is in control over his psychic energy, aligned action ensues as does an improved quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). When an individual participates in the “want what you want to want” exercise, he is given the opportunity to not only identify the values that feed his desire to want to change his behaviors, but he is also forced to focus his attention on how those values are reflected in the behavioral change. Therefore, it is hypothesized that when a participant completes this exercise, his attention will center in on how he can act in improved alignment with his personal values.

### **Leadership skill #2: Knows what matters**

**Recommendation #1: Write down specific roles that you play in your life that contribute to your sense of meaning and purpose. Then, identify how each role might enhance another. For example, if your identified roles that give your life meaning are: father, husband, business partner, mentor, and community leader, how might being a father enhance your role as a community leader or vice versa?**

In consideration of the practical implications of living a purposeful life, McKay, Forsyth, and Eifert (2010) acknowledge that it is crucial that an individual learns to navigate conflicts that involve two or more identified areas of importance in his life. Yet, the authors also note that

when we fail to attend to any of our own needs, we lose our sense of direction and self. Kossek, Noe, and DeMarr (1999) identified work-family role synthesis as the process through which an individual can better manage work and caregiving roles. The two critical components of work-family role synthesis are (1) boundary management and (2) role embracement of multiple roles. By identifying those roles that are most important to you in consideration of your purpose in life, you are in essence both specifying and embracing those aspects of your self as being most important. Spotting connections between your identified roles reduces conflict and increases integration. By completing this exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will gain an improved sense of how the various roles that he plays across domains contribute to a greater sense of meaning and purpose, enabling him to know what matters in his life.

**Recommendation #2: Take some time to think about the type of person that you wish to become and write down as many details describing that person as possible. Along with articulating the personal attributes of your future self, identify the specific roles that you want to play at home, at work, and in your community. On a scale of 1-10, rank your level of optimism that each component of your vision is realistic and attainable. Consider your accomplishments in the past, personal beliefs about your self-efficacy, and feedback from others about what you have achieved and about your potential. If your level of optimism is less than 5 for any component, how might you increase your confidence? Are you considering the evidence, or are you jumping to any conclusions about your ability to realize your vision? For components that are ranked 5 or less, take some time to brainstorm about possible ways that your goal may be achieved. If necessary, enlist a partner**

**with whom to brain storm about the possibilities. Once all of your components exceed a rating of 5, identify how each component connects to at least one other component of your vision.**

Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) suggest that an individual's ideal self is the driver of intentional change in one's behavior, emotions, perceptions and attitudes. The ideal self is highly individualistic, both conscious and unconscious, and can be manifested in a clear vision of the kind of person that one wishes to become. According to Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006), once an individual has envisioned his ideal self, it serves as a powerful guiding force informing the individual if his actions and decisions are in alignment with his vision. The authors identify three processes by which a healthy ideal self can be realized: (1) to increase one's awareness of the ideal self and its components, (2) to test the importance of each component, and (3) to identify how each component connects to the larger vision in a holistic way. The first step is to articulate the ideal self, consisting of (1) an image of the desired future, (2) hope that the image is attainable, (3) a historical context of the individual's core identity supporting the feasibility of the identified vision. It is important to note that the ideal self is different from the "ought self," in that the ought self is a version of an ideal self that is imposed by others or by the individual's desire to please others (Baumeister, 1998).

Hope plays an important role in the development of a vision of the ideal self; it is what distinguishes a realistic vision from a pipe dream (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Snyder (2002) defines hope as a motivational state resulting from an individual's identified pathway and agency thoughts in pursuit of an identified goal. A pathway thought is an identified route towards goal achievement, while an agency thought is the belief in oneself that he is capable of goal

achievement. Both pathway and agency thoughts can be minimized or derailed altogether when an individual jumps to conclusions about his abilities without considering all relevant data (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). By completing this exercise, the participant will first identify the specific characteristics of his ideal self, developing an improved sense of what really matters in his life. Next, by challenging any self-defeating thoughts about the successful realization of the ideal self, it is hypothesized that a realistically hopeful attitude that positive change is possible will result.

### **Leadership skill #3: Conveys values with stories**

**Recommendation #1: Find a large piece of paper, and draw a long line down the middle.**

**This line represents your own lifeline from birth to your current age. Identify three or four points that you consider to be turning points, when you learned something really important about yourself that changed you. Write a story about each experience, describing not only the situation but also what you learned about yourself from having experienced it. When considering the stories you wrote, identify any commonalities. Can you identify the tension in each experience, and how you overcame it? What can you conclude about how you learn important lessons?**

Thomas (2008) defines a “crucible” as a transformative experience that shapes a leader because it challenges him to be someone or to do something that he has never been or done before. Although individual crucibles will vary significantly in their content and context, a unifying theme across crucible stories is “crucibles catalyze the process of learning *from experience*” (Thomas, 2008, p. 18). Crucibles provide leaders with insights about how they learn

and about how they adapt and grow in the face of novelty or adversity. Resilience plays a key role in the powerful nature of the crucible, for it is the process of (1) recognizing the innate tension of a crucible, (2) reframing the tension into something manageable, and (3) resolving the tension constructively, that makes people better leaders. Thomas (2008) reported having used a version of *Your Learning Lifeline* when he interviewed individuals about critical events and relationships that they believed shaped them as leaders. Recommendation #1 is adapted from that exercise. By writing down several crucibles of one's own, it is hypothesized that the participant will learn how to convey his values through the process of storytelling.

**Recommendation #2: Imagine that you are attending a seminar where you do not know anyone. It is a week-long seminar, and you will be working very closely with the other 20 attendees over the course of the week. Prepare a positive introduction for yourself. Think of a time in your life when you were at your very best. You may have been facing a particularly difficult situation, or you may have enhanced an already positive situation. Write your introduction as concretely as you can. Allow the facts of the story to demonstrate your strengths and values, and try to close your story with a powerful ending.**

At the outset of his annual undergraduate seminar in positive psychology, Seligman (2004) assigned his students to give serious introductions, or positive introductions as they are sometimes called (J. O. Pawelski, course lecture, September 9, 2011). The students were instructed to tell a story about a specific event in their lives when they were at their very best. The purpose of this exercise was not to focus on achievements or performances (Peterson, 2006), but rather on the individual's underlying positive motivations, strengths and virtues (Seligman,



2004). Recommendation #2 is adapted from Pawelski (course lecture, September 9, 2011), and is intended to help individuals to acknowledge their own virtues and values through the process of telling a story about the time when they were “at their best.” This is particularly important for leaders, for it is in the authentic nature through which a leader’s values are articulated in his story that generates trust and emotion in his audience (Guber, 2007). According to Singer (2004), the narratives that individuals tell themselves and others about their own life experiences, lead to the development of self-concepts, beliefs about others, and ideas about how the world works. By creating a positive introduction for oneself, focusing on a time when the participant believes he was at his very best, it is hypothesized that his personal values will shine through the narrative improving his ability to convey his values with stories.

#### **Leadership skill #4: Envisions legacy**

**Recommendation #1: Think about your life in the future. Imagine that everything has gone as well as it possibly could. You have worked hard and succeeded at accomplishing all of your life goals. This is the point in time when you have realized all of your dreams, you have become your best possible self. Now, write about what you imagined as concretely and in as much detail as possible.**

Recommendation #1 is adapted from King (2001) who found that the process of writing about one’s life goals was associated with both physical and psychological health. Pennebaker (1998) suggested that writing about one’s life goals may also be beneficial in pursuit of those goals, because the writing process can reduce goal conflict. In addition, individuals who can visualize themselves successfully achieving their goals are more likely to succeed in doing so

largely due to (1) an improved ability to problem-solve or to plan according to their identified goals, and (2) reduced anxiety about the future (Pham & Taylor, 1999). Lastly, Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006) found that in comparison to other exercises, the “best possible self exercise” produced a significant increase in positive affect and self-concordant motivation. This exercise forces the participant to visualize what his best possible future self looks like, making it easier for him to envision the kind of legacy that he hopes to leave behind.

**Recommendation #2: Take some time to think about the personal legacy that you would like to leave after you die. How would you want to be remembered by your family, friends, and colleagues? What kind of influence would you like to have had on your community, on your society, or on the world? Write down a summary of your life, your values, and your accomplishments as you would like your descendants to remember you by as your own obituary.**

Recommendation #2 is adapted from Lyubomirsky (2007) who recommends writing a personal legacy that you wish to leave after you die as an exercise that will help individuals to identify purposeful goals that are most meaningful to them. An individual is more likely to persevere and to succeed at goals that are of more long-term importance than short-term (Lyubomirsky, 2007), because when people are guided by long-term goals their smaller everyday actions become components of something much larger and more important than the actions themselves (Halvorson, 2010). In the face of making daily decisions, an individual who has a clear sense of what he wants his personal legacy to look like will likely ask himself *why* he is making a decision or taking a specific action. People who think in these terms are less likely to

act impulsively, less likely to be vulnerable to temptation, and more likely to plan their actions in advance (Halvorson, 2010). As a result, it is hypothesized that the participant who completes this exercise will not only envision his legacy but will also start to live in better alignment with that vision.

### **Leadership skill #5: Is accountable**

**Recommendation #1: Communicate your goal to another person, whether it be to a spouse, friend, or colleague. Better yet, broadcast your goal to your entire team at work or to a community that is important to you. Then, commit to taking one specific and realistic action toward your goal each day, and communicate that action to others.**

Making a public commitment to personal goals increases the likelihood that an individual will achieve them (Lyubomirsky, 2007). By soliciting others to support a commitment to behave in alignment with an identified goal, an individual is more likely to follow through with his intentions to appear consistent with himself and with others (Locke & Latham, 2002). Once a commitment to a goal is made, it is of utmost importance to act on that commitment by simply doing something, regardless of how small, that serves as a means to the end goal. Success with a daily activity that aligns with a bigger goal will likely (1) reduce any anxiety associated with the lingering goal (Lyubomirsky, 2007), and (2) create positive emotion (i.e. hope, pride, joy) that will in turn generate an upward spiral of positive emotion leading to an individual's improved ability to create good mental habits that are in alignment with the bigger goal (Fredrickson, 2009). By completing the recommended exercise, it is theorized that the participant will feel

accountable for following through with his goal because he has communicated that goal to others and has committed to taking a specific action towards the realization of that goal.

**Recommendation #2: Create a daily goal that is aligned with one of your identified life values. Your goal should be specific, measurable, and difficult. It should be an activity that will stretch you, but one that can be realistically achieved in the face of life's daily expectations of you. Share your goal and its intentions with someone who is willing to support you in your efforts to succeed. Check in with your partner daily after having completed the activity to (a) share your thoughts about your personal progress and (b) ask for feed back about your progress towards your goal.**

Goal driven behavior often requires self-regulation. Self-regulation is an important human process that enables individuals to exert control over their thoughts, feelings, impulses, appetites, and performances (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006). According to Baumeister et al. (2006), self-regulation is like a muscle; it fatigues when used but it can also be strengthened with exercise or practice. One way to practice self-regulation is by establishing self-set goals. Locke and Latham (2002) found that individuals who set their own specific and difficult goals (a) directed their attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities, and (b) became energized by their goals and persistent in their efforts to achieve them. Goal achievement is highest when people are committed to their goals, and that commitment can be strengthened by making it public (Lock & Latham, 2002). Soliciting feed back from others specific to the progress that an individual is making towards achieving his goal helps to ensure its success. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that

the participant will feel committed to following through with his goal not only because it is self-set but also because he has made it public and has enlisted the help of another to ensure that he follows through with his intent. As a result, the participant becomes more accountable.

**Leadership skill #6: Embodies values consistently**

**Recommendation #1: Select a diverse group of people from whom you will solicit feed back (past and present colleagues, family members, friends, teachers, mentors, etc.). Email your selected group (1) asking if they would be willing to participate in an exercise that is intended to assist you in your efforts to improve your well-being, and (2) requesting that they provide you with information about your strengths supported by specific examples of times when you used those strengths in ways that were meaningful to them. Upon receiving the responses from your group, search for common themes and add observations of your own behavior to the examples provided. Then, organize the information in a table. Compose a written self-portrait integrating and summarizing the accumulated information which will then serve as an insightful image that will remind you of your contributions in the past and will guide you in the future. The final step is to design your life around your strengths, maximizing your opportunities to use what you and others have identified as your unique contributions to the world.**

Strengths-based educational curricula have been found to be associated with increased intrinsic motivation, and individuals who actively develop their strengths have been found to experience elevated levels of self-esteem (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011). In their exploration of effective approaches to both developing and leveraging strengths, Biswas-Diener et al. (2011)

suggest that individuals construct their lives and adjust their behaviors in ways that allow them to use their strengths most readily. The authors recommend that an individual use his strengths regularly to achieve personal goals that are aligned with that individual's core values. Any one person's combination of strengths is highly individualistic, and this combination helps to define the unique contributions that an individual will make in life (Fredrickson, 2009). Roberts et al. (2005) define the *Reflected Best Self* exercise, from which recommendation #1 is adapted, as a "systemic process for gathering and analyzing data about your best self" (p. 2), and Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, and Quinn (2005) propose that individuals use the "Reflected Best-Self" exercise, to develop an improved understanding of their unique strengths (competencies, talents, values, and personality attributes). It is hypothesized that by completing this exercise, the participant will develop a better understanding of how he already exhibits his strengths through his actions and will visualize ways in which he may use them more often in the future.

**Recommendation #2: Identify one daily action that you can take that is consistent with and reflective of your core values. Be sure that the goal is reasonable, and then commit to completing this action daily for 90 days. For example, if your core value is living a healthy lifestyle, then your daily action might be to walk to work every day for 90 days. Once you are committed to your daily action, inform a confidant of your commitment and ask that he/she helps to hold you accountable to completing your activity daily. After completing your goal each day, rate how difficult it was for you to do so on a scale of 1 to 10. Keep track of your scores. After 90 days, how did your scores trend? Did it get harder or easier to complete your daily activity, or did it remain about the same difficulty? How likely are**

**you to continue the activity after 90 days? Is there another values-driven action that you can add to your daily routine for another 90 days?**

The process of creating a new habit starts with a mindset and a commitment to a desired change (James, 1984). Once an individual is determined to change, James suggests that the individual take a specific action that is aligned with the desired goal. This action must be repeated many times, for once it is, new neural pathways reflecting the desired change are created. It is not good enough to simply theorize about how one may live in alignment with his core values. The process of creating new neural pathways in the brain requires a tremendous amount of work at outset; but once they are carved out, a habit is formed. At the point of which an action becomes a habit, the work required to sustain the activity is significantly reduced. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will habituate a specific action that is aligned with his core values through commitment and repetition. As a result, he will embody his values more consistently than he had before completing the exercise. If the participant chooses to repeat the exercise with another values-driven action for an additional 90 days, then he will continue to strengthen this embodiment.

## **Be Whole**

### **Leadership skill #7: Helps others**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a goal of yours that is intrinsically motivated, or one that is inherently rewarding to pursue. (As opposed to an extrinsically motivated goal that serves as a means to some other end.) For example, an intrinsically motivated goal might be to serve as a leader in your community, because you enjoy developing purposeful**

**relationships with others. Identify the beneficiaries of the work necessary to achieve your goal. In our example, your neighbors would be the beneficiaries of your work. Once you have identified the beneficiaries, arrange to have a conversation with them. Ask that they tell you the specific ways in which your work affects them. Ask them how you might be able to help them. Then, if feasible, commit to doing so.**

Grant and Berg (2010) define prosocial motivation as “the desire to have a positive impact on other people or social collectives” (p. 1). The pro-socially motivated individual is driven by an underlying concern for the other. Sheldon, Arndt, and Houser-Marko (2003) found that individuals who pursue intrinsically motivated goals have a natural tendency to gravitate towards situations that simultaneously benefit themselves and others over time. Grant and Berg (2010) found that connecting individuals with the beneficiaries of their work enhanced prosocial motivation and task performance, perhaps by an increase in experienced inspiration, gratitude, and empathy. It is hypothesized that by completing the recommended exercise, the participant will become motivated to help others by developing an improved understanding of how his actions directly and positively influence the lives of others.

**Recommendation #2: Over the course of the next week, perform *five* acts of kindness for others. These acts may be large or small in nature (i.e. help an elderly person walk across the street, donate blood, write a thank-you letter). The acts may be for the same person or for different people, and the recipient may or may not be aware of the act. At the end of the week, take a moment to reflect on how your specific acts of kindness affected both you and your beneficiaries. (If the recipient was not aware of the act, imagine how the recipient**



**would respond if he/she become aware of it.) Journal about the experiences and the real or perceived responses.**

Helping others can lead to an array of positive social consequences (i.e. enhanced likability, appreciation, and gratitude) (Lyubomirsky, 2007). Research shows that even when practicing an act of kindness is unpleasant for the doer, the results of such an act are positive for both the doer and the recipient. Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) found that performing acts of kindness led to a significant boost in happiness, and recommendation #2 is adapted from the instructions in their study. According to Lyubomirsky (2007), doing good deeds “leads you to perceive others more positively and more charitably... and fosters a heightened sense of interdependence and cooperation in your community” (p. 129). In addition, adults who volunteer regularly experience an enhanced sense of social contribution (Piliavin, 2003). Lastly, the act of helping another reinforces the helper’s abilities and resources, leading to the helper’s improved sense of self-efficacy and accomplishment (Lyubormirsky, 2007). It is hypothesized that by focusing on completing purposeful acts of kindness for a specific time, and then by reflecting on those experiences, the participant will recognize the positive consequences of helping others. The hope is that the participant will continue to help others because of the positive outcomes experienced as a result of doing so during the experimental week.

### **Leadership skill #8: Clarifies expectations**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a place in your work, home, or community, where the quality of communication between individuals is poor (in your team at work, between you and your teenage son at home, between neighbors, etc.). Strategize about what you could do to**

**improve the communication by creating connections of higher quality. There are four ways to create successful high quality connections. Choose one, or a combination of two or more of the following ways to create a high quality connection where one had not previously existed. (1) Commit yourself to being present, attentive, and affirming of the other person. (2) Communicate not only your support of the other person but also your willingness to help him to succeed. (3) Show that you trust the other person, that you know that he will live up to your expectations. (4) Allow yourself to play or simply to goof off with the other person without worrying about the outcome.**

Dutton and Heaphy (2003) define a high-quality connection between two people as one that has the power to enliven people, that involves mutual awareness, and that is flexible, strong, and resilient. Dutton (J. E. Dutton, course lecture, March 3, 2012) identifies four pathways to building high quality connections: respectful engagement, task enabling, trusting, and play. In addition, Dutton (2003) suggests that leaders convey their commitment to making high quality connections with others in four ways: by being vulnerable and open to others, by being really attentive to others, by choosing to use language that fosters a connection, and by creating positive images of the future. To create more positivity in one's life, Fredrickson (2009) recommends that individuals focus on creating high-quality connections with others as opposed to being unaware of others, or worst yet, thinking negatively about others. Recommendation #1 is adapted from Fredrickson's exercise. It is hypothesized that the participant will learn to clarify his expectations of others by improving the quality of the connections he makes with them.

**Recommendation #2: Next time someone shares news of a positive event that occurred, take a moment to stop what you are doing and listen to the story. Then, respond enthusiastically, and communicate interest, understanding, and caring by following-up with a question. The focus here is to be active and constructive in your responding to another person's good news. For example, if your son comes home from his baseball game and reports "We won the game Dad!" an active and constructive response would be, "That's great son, all that practice is paying off! What was your favorite moment in the game?" Take note of how often people share good news with you, and try to respond in an active and constructive way each time.**

When positive events occur, people often share news of the events with others. This process is called capitalization, and active-constructive responding is an enthusiastic way of responding to someone else's positive news that conveys understanding, validation, and caring (Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006). Active-constructive responding has been shown to create positive emotions (Gable et al., 2006), and it has been suggested that in order for a relationship to thrive, the ratio of positive to negative interactions needs to exceed 3:1 (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004). In addition, Gable et al. (2006) suggest that active-constructive responding leads to the development of additional resources for the capitalizer, for the responder, and for the relationship between the two. By completing the recommended exercise and learning to actively and positively respond to others, it is hypothesized that the participant will learn how to better communicate with his shareholders. Clarifying one's expectations of another is thought to be an important aspect of improved overall communication.

**Leadership skill #9: Builds networks of support**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a specific area in your life where you could benefit from receiving some help (i.e. Are you struggling to get to the gym in the morning? Are you having difficulty meeting a deadline? Are you feeling stuck in a dead end job with no other options?) Identify someone within your network who might be able to provide some support to you (i.e. Do you have a friend who gets to the gym regularly? Do you know someone who never misses a deadline? Do you know someone who is a recruiter or who has used a really good recruiter in the past?) This person is going to serve as your helper. Plan a time when you will meet with your helper, describe your situation, and ask for the help that you are seeking.**

People often rely on help from others in pursuit of their goals across all life domains, but assistance from others may not occur spontaneously or without some form of provocation (Flynn, 2003). Yet, asking for help can feel uncomfortable and can be embarrassing. Besides feeling incompetent in some way, help seekers tend to focus on the possibility of rejection when considering asking someone else for help (Flynn & Lake, 2008). In general, people tend to underestimate others' willingness to provide their help and support when asked for it. Flynn and Lake (2008) found that help seekers fail to consider the uncomfortable and/or embarrassing nature of the potential helper saying no, due to a social norm that exists to assist those who are in need. There is social pressure to comply with a help seeker's request, and therefore the odds are good that a helping request will be responded to favorably. By enlisting the support from someone who has a proven track record of success in the participant's identified area of

weakness, it is hypothesized that the individual completing this exercise will learn the value in building networks of support when faced with challenging circumstances.

**Recommendation #2: Think of something that you really want or really need, but do not have the resources yourself to attain. Go to <http://www.humaxnetworks.com/default.asp> and read about the power of social networking. Sign up to participate in the online reciprocity ring, Ripplleffect, or consider using the reciprocity ring for your own community or organization.**

According to Grant and Berg (2010), an experience that sparks prosocial motivation, or an individual's genuine desire to help another individual or group of individuals, can serve as an enabling condition in which social bonds are strengthened. In addition, research on prosocial motivation suggests that individuals are not necessarily self-serving in their goals but are instead attracted to a more pluralistic approach to goal pursuits. Lastly, when the social norm is a collective one, individuals are more likely to feel that it is appropriate to experience and to express prosocial motivation. The Reciprocity Ring (Humax Networks, 2010) is an exercise that is intended to uncover both the power of prosocial motivation and the potential of social networking. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will experience the power and potential of the social network in support of any one individual's goal.

### **Leadership skill #10: Transfers skills across domains**

**Recommendation #1: Think about something that you are most proud (a work accomplishment, a relationship, a commitment to exercise, etc.). What skills did you use to**

**realize success? Now, identify an area in your life that you feel could use improvement.**

**How might you use the skills that you identified as being instrumental in creating something that you are most proud in the area of your life that you want to improve?**

**Create an action plan leveraging your identified skills in this new area.**

Recommendation #1 is adapted from Niemiec (2009) and his recommendation for individuals to leverage their character strengths in pursuit of living their best lives possible. Niemiec suggests that the process of successfully leveraging an individual's unique character strengths requires three steps: awareness, exploration, and application. The VIA Institute on Character (2011) describes the intent of each step. During the awareness phase, an individual develops an understanding of his strengths by considering a time when he was successful and identifying the specific strengths that contributed to that success. The exploration phase is intended to help the individual to identify the areas of his life where he is currently using his strengths, as well as the areas in his life where his strengths could be better leveraged. During the application phase, the individual is encouraged to generate a plan outlining how he will use his strengths more often in his daily life in pursuit of his life goals. Lastly, Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson (2005) found that by using their identified strengths in new ways, individuals experienced an increase in happiness and a decrease in depression for 6 months. By completing this exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will experience a boost in confidence by reflecting on a time in his life during which he experienced success and by identifying the specific skills that he believed led to that success. By identifying other domains in which these skills may serve a similar purpose, it is further hypothesized that the participant will learn how to view challenges across life domains from a confident perspective.

**Recommendation #2: Go to <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/> and take the VIA Me! Character Profile. This is an assessment that will provide you with information about your best attributes, your character strengths. The assessment is free, and takes approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the assessment, a report highlighting your top five signature strengths will be generated. Take a look at your signature strengths. How often are you using each? How might you make each one stronger? How might you use them more often? In what areas of your life should you be using a strength more often? In what areas of your life should you be using a strength less often? Come up with a plan outlining how you will use each one of your signature strengths in an area of your life where you believe that it will be most beneficial to you and to others.**

Biswas-Diener et al. (2011) suggest that the most effective way for people to create positive, lasting change in their lives is to use a strengths development approach. This approach requires that individuals first identify their unique strengths and then apply those strengths to the different areas of their lives where and when appropriate, rather than taking a blanket approach to the application of signature strengths across all life domains. The focus of the strengths development approach is primarily on how an individual can improve his unique strengths competency by applying them in the areas in his life where they can be most effective for him. The authors suggest that when leveraging individual strengths, people should focus on improving proficiency, frequency, and regulation. In other words, individuals should become even better at using their strengths, using them more often, and using them in the appropriate contexts. By completing the recommended exercise as instructed, it is hypothesized that not only will the

participant become better of aware of his unique strengths but he will also explore ways in which he can effectively use those strengths across life domains.

**Leadership skill #11: Manages boundaries intelligently**

**Recommendation #1: Establish a time to talk with the major stakeholders in your life when you will collaborate to create mutually satisfying boundaries between your different life domains. When designing boundaries that separate the various roles you play, focus on incorporating both physical and temporal aspects with each boundary. For example, the home office will be used for Dad's work only and he will occupy that space from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and again from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Another example might be, blackberries will be turned off and put away in the kitchen drawer during dinner time.**

Sutton and Noe (2005) define boundaries as both physical and temporal limits that help individuals to differentiate between life domains. Boundaries help individuals to distinguish between the various roles that they play in their lives. Shumate and Fulk (2004) view social roles as being negotiated through communication between the role player and those with whom he interacts. Therefore, the boundaries between an individual's various roles within his life are actively constructed and maintained through open communication with his stakeholders. It is important that both time and space be used as organizing mechanisms in the creation and maintenance of role boundaries (Myrie & Daly, 2009; Shumate & Fulk, 2004). With practice, the intentionally manufactured role boundaries become routine requiring less conscious effort to maintain. It is hypothesized that the participant in this exercise will learn how to create and to



implement effective boundaries by working with an important stakeholder to design reasonable boundaries that are both physical and temporal in nature.

**Recommendation #2: In your efforts to improve your boundaries between the different parts of your life, consider the following options:**

- 1. Use other people: How might you seek support from another/others?**
- 2. Leverage technology: What technology can you use to help create improved boundaries (i.e. voicemail, email forwarding, smart phone reminders, etc.)**
- 3. Invoke triage: How might you prioritize seemingly urgent matters in consideration of your values and needs?**
- 4. Allow differential permeability: In what ways/areas will you permit fuzzy boundaries?**
- 5. Control work time: How will you best manage your time (i.e. block off certain hours for certain roles, exercise every morning at the same time, etc.)?**
- 6. Find respite: How might you take a break from having to manage your boundaries (i.e. vacation, no-work weekend, retreat, etc.)?**
- 7. Adapt physical boundaries or manipulate physical space: How might you create a physical boundary to separate your roles? How might you create space between them?**
- 8. Manage physical artifacts: How might you use tangible items to separate domains (i.e. separate calendars, different email addresses, etc.)?**
- 9. Set expectations: How might you work with your shareholders to establish boundary expectations?**
- 10. Confront violations: How might you handle boundary violations when they occur?**

Recommendation #2 is adapted from the research of Kriener, Hollensbe and Sheep (2009). The authors identified four ways that people successfully implement boundaries between life domains: behavioral, temporal, physical, and communicative, and suggested strategies on how to successfully use each. Examples of behavioral strategies include: using other people to support your efforts, leveraging technology, invoking triage based on personal values and needs, and allowing differential permeability. Temporal strategies include: controlling work time and finding respite. Physical strategies include: adapting physical boundaries, manipulating physical space and managing physical artifacts. Lastly, communicative strategies include: setting expectations and confronting violators (Kriener et al., 2009). By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will consider alternative ways to effectively manage boundaries than he has considered to date. By doing so, the hope is that the participant will adopt an improved approach to managing boundaries across life domains.

### **Leadership skill #12: Fits domains together**

**Recommendation #1: A role schema is a cognitive framework that organizes our knowledge about the appropriate behaviors for a person in a particular role (i.e. spouse, neighbor, boss, etc.). Think about the roles that you play in the different areas of your life and create a personalized schema for each role. For example, how do you believe a spouse should act? Next, identify your behaviors that are consistent with each identified schema. Is there anything that you could do differently to be in better alignment with your schemas? Identify any of your identified behaviors that overlap across role schemas (i.e. does acting with compassion appear under both the “spouse” and “neighbor” schema). Identify the**

**behaviors that strengthen your roles in different areas of your life (i.e. does acting with compassion in your marriage make you a better neighbor). How do your role schemas align with your vision for the future?**

In consideration of an individual's boundaries that serve to differentiate between various life domains, Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2010) emphasize the importance of role transitions, or the boundary-crossing action inherent in disengaging from one role while simultaneously engaging in another. Individuals differ in the degree to which they segment or integrate their lives across domains (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Yet Ashforth et al. (2010) assert that regardless of where an individual lies on the continuum between segmentation and integration, he is inclined to want to minimize the difficulty of transitioning from one role to another. The authors suggest that role schemas be used in an individual's initial efforts to transition with improved ease between life domains and their associated roles. The goal being, that with practice, the transition process itself becomes automatic. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will develop an improved understanding of how his various life roles are interconnected, enabling him to transition more effectively and efficiently from one role to another. In turn, it is predicted that the participant will gain a better sense of how his life domains fit together.

**Recommendation #2: Consider the roles that you play in each of your life domains: work, family, community and self. (1) Identify the strengths of each domain and write down the resources that enable you to be your best in each. How might you leverage those resources across domains? (2) Approximately how much of your time and energy is dedicated to each**

**domain? The goal is to balance your involvement across domains. If your involvement is skewed, how might you create improved balance? (3) Think about a recent experience that generated really strong positive emotions within you. Relive that experience in your head, trying to recreate those emotions. How might you savor feelings of positivity more often?**

People who play multiple roles in their lives are the highest performers in organizations (Fletcher & Bailyn, 2005). The goal of integrating work with life is to create wins and to maximize performance in all life domains. Successful integration requires an understanding and valuing of an individual's unique skills and competencies leveraged in each role and the sharing of that knowledge across domains (Fletcher & Bailyn, 2005). According to Friedman & Greenhaus (2000), there are aspects of work and family life that can be mutually enriching and that can facilitate integration that include: resources, involvement, and emotional gratification. Resources improve an individual's ability to meet the demands of the environment, and can be both tangible (money, time) or intangible (positive feedback, self-esteem). The authors found that resources provided in one life domain enhance an individual's experience in another. Integration is more likely to occur when an individual's involvement is balanced across domains. Lastly, capitalizing on positive emotions experienced in one life domain promotes integration by transferring over to another (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000) and creates what Fredrickson (2009) defines as an upward spiral of positive emotion leading to personal growth and well-being. It is hypothesized that by completing the recommended exercise, the participant will develop an improved sense of interconnectedness among his life's domains and the skills that contribute to his success in each. In addition, he will be better able to gauge how much energy is being dedicated to each area of his life and to gain perspective on how to better balance that energy

across domains. By savoring positive experiences and emotions, it is hypothesized that the participant will be better equipped to complete the necessary but difficult work of synthesizing the often disparate areas of his life.

## **Be Innovative**

### **Leadership skill #13: Is open to new ways of doing things**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a specific problem in your life for which you hope to find a solution. Gather the stakeholders who are involved in the identified problem. Describe the problem and your desire to solve it to the group. Then, open the floor to collectively exchange ideas about potential solutions and record all that is shared. Decide on a solution, draft a plan of action, and implement it. Schedule a follow-up meeting to review your results. If the plan was unsuccessful, craft another plan of action using another idea that was voiced. Continue in this manner until the identified problem is solved.**

Not all people are creative and not all people can become more creative, largely due to differences in personalities (Chen & Chen, 2012). The authors highlight “openness to new experiences” as a personality strength that contributes to one’s ability to be creative. Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, and Kramer (2004) found that leaders who remain open to and appreciative of others’ ideas, who are skilled at communicating, and who use interpersonal networks masterfully to think outside of the box, architect creativity-friendly environments in which innovation thrives. Lastly, Hiam (1998) identifies nine habits that inhibit creativity: failure to ask questions, failure to record ideas, failure to revisit ideas, failure to express ideas, failure to think in new ways, failure to wish for more, failure to try being creative, failure to keep trying, and failure to

tolerate creative behavior. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will open himself up to others' ideas and experiences in a way that facilitates innovation. As a result, the hope is that the participant will benefit from the group's creative resources and will recognize the potential for collective brainstorming activities.

**Recommendation #2: Think of a specific goal in your life big or small, or perhaps an existing problem that needs solving. You will be creating a mind map, so arm yourself with several large pieces of blank paper (without lines) and different colored markers. Find a quiet area, and try to relax in an effort to channel your creative side. Select a key word or key image that represents the goal or problem on which you will be focussing and write it down or draw an image representing it in the center of the page. (Try to suspend any judgment that you may have about your poor drawing skills, and use images whenever possible.) For example, if your goal is to buy a new car, draw a car in the center of the page. Next, branch off any ideas relating to your central goal with different colored branches, using one or two key word(s) for each related idea. In our car example, you might draw the following branches: safety, payment, size, performance, visual appeal, gas mileage, etc. Draw sub-branches from each branch further delineating your ideas, until you have exhausted all possibilities. Draw boxes around the most important information, edit, and regroup where appropriate before drawing a final version of your mind map on a fresh sheet of paper. Once you have completed your final version, ask yourself: (1) What did you learn from this experience? (2) Why is it important? (3) How will you apply what you have learned?**

Mind mapping encourages whole brain thinking, and has been shown to enhance both creativity and productivity while simultaneously improving an individual's learning and efficiency (Mento, Martinelli, & Jones, 1999). Mind maps are graphic representations of information that allow an individual to look at a large amount of information about a subject on one page in a holistic, nonlinear way. The visual presentation encourages the mapper to make connections between ideas and to be flexible in their interpretation and application.

Recommendation #2 is adapted from the steps for creating a mind map (Anonymous, 1998; Mento et al., 1999). Upon completion of a mind map, Mento et al. (1999) asked the mapper three questions about the experience of mind mapping: (1) What did you learn? (2) Why was it important? (3) How can you apply it? These questions served to reinforce new learning and to drive creativity. By completing the mind map exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will develop an improved holistic understanding of the goal or problem at hand. As a result, the participant may become aware of alternative ways to approach the task.

**Leadership skill #14: Focuses on results, not time**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a goal of yours, and write it down. Identify your personal strengths that will assist you in pursuit of your goal, and write them down. Now, think of what additional resources you will need to achieve your goal and name specific people in your network whose skills and talents complement your own. Be sure to include at least one person on your team who excels in each of the following domains: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking.**

Mehra, Joyal, and Rhee (2011) define the quality orientation as “a philosophical commitment to developing and maintaining a sustainable quality-based competitive advantage leading to increased business performance” (p. 953). In other words, the focus is on producing a quality outcome in pursuit of any goal. To produce best quality outcomes, the most effective leaders themselves are not well-rounded (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Instead, they surround themselves with people that complement their strengths to create a well-rounded and extraordinarily capable team. Rath and Conchie (2008) found that top-performing teams have strengths in the following four domains: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will focus less on the time it will take to complete a task and focus more on the process necessary to complete the task well.

**Recommendation #2: Identify a goal of yours, and consider the following prompts in the development of a plan for its pursuit. How can you positively frame the goal in a way that excites and motivates you? In what ways can you maximize your engagement in pursuit of your goal? How can you create an environment that will nourish your ability to focus on the task at hand? What can you learn from your experiences that can inform your process now? Identify people from whom you will receive feed back about your progress.**

DeRue and Ashford (2010) highlight the importance of leaders taking charge of their own development by participating in the process of mindful engagement. There are three aspects of mindful engagement that enable leaders to not only achieve their goals but also to become their best selves as leaders: the approach, the action, and the reflection. First, how one approaches and



frames an experience directly affects how one will engage in and learn from that experience. In this way, individuals get what they expect. Second, being actively engaged in one's experiences requires experimentation, a willingness to seek and receive feedback, and the ability to focus and to regulate emotions. Lastly, reflecting on experiences informs leaders about what contributed to or inhibited past successes. Identifying what and who it was that contributed to a desired result informs a leader how to approach and to act in the future. By focusing on the process of mindful engagement step by step in this exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will make a shift from focusing on the time it takes to complete a goal to focusing on the desired result.

**Leadership skill #15: Embraces change courageously**

**Recommendation #1: Next time you are faced with a change, take out a piece of paper and (1) write down your worst-case scenario beliefs: What are the worst possible outcomes that *could* happen as a result of the impending change? (2) Estimate the likelihood that each one of those outcomes will happen (1 in a million, 75% chance, somewhere in the middle) and write down those odds by each worst-case scenario belief. (3) Write down best-case scenario alternatives for each one of your worst-case scenario beliefs next to your estimated odds: What are the best possible outcomes that *could* happen as a result of the impending change? In consideration of both worst and best case scenario beliefs, write down the *most likely* outcome for each belief. After considering the *most likely* outcomes, write down a plan delineating how you will approach the impending change.**

Reivich and Shatté (2002) argue that an individual's beliefs about the possibility of change either enhances or inhibits that change. In other words, a leader's psychological approach to change plays a significant role in the outcome. When facing change, it is of utmost importance that an individual acknowledges his beliefs that the impending change generates. The next step is to evaluate the accuracy of those beliefs, to determine how realistic they are. The final step is to generate new beliefs that reflect improved accuracy, or that are more realistic in nature.

Recommendation #2 is adapted from the authors' change skill enhancing exercise called *Putting it in Perspective* (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). By completing this exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will create realistic expectations for himself in the face of change. After having considered the likelihood of realizing his worst-case scenario beliefs, his best-case scenario beliefs, and the most likely outcome, the hope is that the participant will move forward armed with improved confidence and courage.

**Recommendation #2: Identify an impending change that you fear. Now, think about the reasons why you fear this change. All of your reasons for fearing the change are your beliefs about what *might* happen as a result from the change. Write your beliefs down. Take some time to consider each one of these beliefs. How accurate are they? Which beliefs are realistic concerns, and which beliefs are unrealistic? In what ways are you in control of the realistic concerns as you embark upon this change?**

Resistance to change is often due to a false perception based on lack of information, the misinterpretation of information, or irrational thinking (Umiker, 1997). Spreitzer and Quinn (1996) found that poor self-esteem and lack of self-efficacy contribute to an individual's

resistance to change. Considering both assertions, Reivich and Shatté (2002) have found that self-efficacy and resilience result from an individual's belief that he has the power to control the events in his life, and that belief is based on the accurate assessment of information. To increase resilience, it is important that individuals identify their beliefs and challenge the ones that are inhibiting their growth. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will first develop a better understanding of how his fear is working for or against him as he faces the impending change. If the fear is grounded in an unrealistic concern, then the participant will be encouraged to challenge and deescalate the fear accordingly. Alternatively, if the fear is grounded in a realistic concern, the participant will be encouraged to create ways in which he can navigate his fear by taking control over the circumstances that he deems negotiable.

### **Leadership skill #16: Demonstrates eagerness to learn**

**Recommendation #1: Think of a goal that you have attempted to achieve on your own, but failed to accomplish. Now, identify a person who you would consider to be an expert in that area, and enlist his/her expertise in pursuit of your goal. Alternatively, identify a group of people who share your same goal and join it. For example, if you have the goals of eating healthier and losing weight, you could (a) hire a nutritionist and personal trainer or (b) join Weight Watchers and join a group exercise class.**

People are not simply observers of their lives, they are instead agents who actively regulate their behaviors in pursuit of their goals (Bandura, 2001). An individual is only capable of creating so much for himself by using his own strengths and resources. People are social

animals and therefore depend on others to accomplish what it is that they cannot realize on their own. According to Bandura (2001), social cognitive theory states that there are three different modes of human agency that empower individuals to live their lives to fullest: personal, proxy, and collective. To generate extraordinary results, an individual must not only rely on himself but also on the social environment he selects. Proxy agency relies heavily on the perceived expertise of another, so when an individual is weak in a particular skill set he may choose to enlist the help from an expert in that area. Collective agency leverages a group's shared belief that it will produce the desired results. Bandura highlights the interdependent nature between personal agency and social structure. While an individual exposes himself by asking another person or a group of people for help in pursuit of a desired goal, the social collaboration that ensues enhances that individual's personal development and self-efficacy. By completing the recommended exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will grow by learning from others and will, in turn, experience a boost in self-efficacy. The hope is then that the participant will become more eager to learn from others.

**Recommendation #2: In consideration of your organization's next big goal, embrace an Appreciative Inquiry philosophy. Bring *all* of your stakeholders together; everyone who might play a role in the realization of your goal (executives, middle management, 3rd shift workers, customers, etc.). Identify your goal in positive language (i.e. to become world-class leaders in customer service). Next, ask your stakeholders to share their stories about real successes within the organization that reflect your goal (i.e. the time when Sue's customer emailed the CEO to rave about her experience buying a car). Once you have shared your**

**successes as an organization, identify the possibilities of what “could be.” What is the collective’s vision (i.e. to achieve 100% customer satisfaction)? Considering both your real successes and your vision for the future, write down an inspiring purpose statement (i.e. we will go the extra mile for every one of our customers without exception). Lastly, collectively come up with new ways to realize your vision and to carry out your purpose (i.e. ask customers to fill out a survey after making a purchase, call customers after every experience with the service department to ensure 100% customer satisfaction, etc.). This exercise could also be used in another life domain other than work. Simply replicate the process in pursuit of a family, community, or personal goal with the help of all the stakeholders involved.**

Being able to leverage one’s individual strengths in pursuit of any goal increases self-confidence, engagement, and personal growth (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Rath and Conchie (2008) also found that when leaders enabled their stakeholders to identify their strengths, it led to both individual stakeholder growth and organizational growth. According to Cooperrider (In Press), the magic is in the configurations of stakeholders’ strengths. This is where the opportunity lies for advancing strategic opportunities. Cooperrider, Witney, and Stavros (2008) define appreciative inquiry as “the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them” (p. 3). Appreciative Inquiry assumes that every organization does something that works well, and is intended to facilitate discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations while leveraging social connections. Cooperrider et al. (2008) identify 4 steps to the Appreciative Inquiry process: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny, known as the “4-D” cycle. During the *Discovery* phase, a positive goal is identified for

an organization, and the task is for the stakeholders to discover examples of real successes and best cases within the organization through dialogue and collaboration. During the *Dream* phase, the stakeholders envision “what could be” based on their discovery of “what is” in the discovery phase. During the *Design* phase, the stakeholders come up with an inspiring statement of intent based on both their real successes in the past and their new ideas for the future. Lastly, the *Destiny* phase is intended to generate innovative ways for the stakeholders to realize their shared vision for the future. This is accomplished by leveraging what has worked in the past and by collaboratively identifying new solutions for the future. This exercise is hypothesized to create energy around the innovation process by leveraging the assets of everyone who is affected by the decision making process. By completing the exercise, the hope is that the participant will become enthusiastic about the process of generating effective solutions through positive collaboration.

**Leadership skill #17: Resolves conflicts among domains creatively**

**Recommendation #1: Identify a conflict that exists among two or more of your life domains. To resolve the conflict, consider how you might change your behavior to satisfy all of your needs in the now competing domains. Are there specific activities that you can change or in which you can participate to this end? What action can you take that might create a win-win solution? Is there a different perspective that you can adopt that may eliminate any tension? How might you look at the situation differently? Lastly, how might you engage your support network in these efforts?**

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) view individuals as being capable of actively shaping both the tasks and the relationships that compose their jobs. This process is called “job crafting,”

and it is defined “as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (p. 179). Physically changing task boundaries means adjusting the activities in which one participates, while cognitively changing task boundaries enables the individual to see his job differently. Changing relational boundaries means modifying one’s interactions with others while working. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argue that by tweaking any one of these three elements, an individual’s work identity changes as does the meaning of his work. Recommendation #1 is derived from these three job crafting practices, but is being applied to the process of life crafting across all domains: work, family, community and self. By applying the tenets of job crafting to the process of domain crafting, it is hypothesized that the participant will become more flexible and creative in his approach to resolving inter-domain conflicts.

**Recommendation #2: To reduce conflict between life domains, first consider how you allocate your time. Might a reallocation of time dedicated to one or more of your life domains reduce the conflict? How might you be more efficient with your time? How might you create a win in two or more domains at the same time? Second, consider any strain that you are experiencing in one or more domains. How might you work to reduce that stress? Could you enlist the help of others? What additional resources do you need to acquire to eliminate the strain? Lastly, identify your behaviors that are domain specific and those that are universally appropriate across domains. Create boundaries for yourself around those behaviors that are domain specific to prevent inappropriate spillover.**

Edwards and Rothbard (2005) attribute the stress experienced in consideration of work and family domains to a mismatch in fit between the individual and his environment. Person-

Environment fit theory posits that when there is a misfit between person and environment, stress ensues. More specifically, stress occurs when the environment's supplies do not satisfy the needs of the individual, or conversely, the individual's abilities do not satisfy the environment's demands. Create a reality for oneself in which one's roles across life domains fit comfortably within the expectations of one's environment and vice versa, and stress does not pose a threat.

Inter-role conflict occurs when the demands across life domains are incompatible. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identify three types of conflict specific to work and family, but may be extended across all domains: time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based. *Time-based* conflict occurs when an individual devotes time to one domain, leaving an insufficient amount of time to meet the demands of another domain. *Strain-based* conflict occurs when strain that is generated in one domain makes it difficult to meet the demands of another domain. *Behavior-based* conflict occurs when behaviors required in one domain are not compatible with the demands in another domain, and the individual fails to adjust his behavior when transitioning from one role to another. According to Edwards and Rothbard (2005), and from the perspective of person-environment theory: time should be perceived as an individual ability used to fulfill the demands of his environment, strain only occurs when an individual's abilities fall short of the demands of the environment, and individual behaviors only pose a problem when they are inappropriately transferred from one domain to another. This exercise asks the participant to examine *time*, *strain*, and *behavior*-based conflicts that may exist in his life, and to think about how the identified conflicts may be resolved. As a result, it is hypothesized that the participant will learn how to think creatively about how to minimize inter-domain tension.



**Leadership skill #18: Challenges traditional assumptions**

**Recommendation #1: Consider an unsolved dilemma that you are currently facing. Gather a small group of stakeholders who are involved with or affected by the dilemma. Perform a group brainstorm, writing down as many solutions to the dilemma that you can come up with regardless of their practicality. Once the group is satisfied with the proposed solutions, go through each one as a group and discuss both the possibilities for and potential limitations of each. Identify the group's first, second, and third choices for solutions. Commit to taking action with your first choice solution, with the understanding that if it fails upon implementation, the second and possibly third choices will be revisited.**

Leaders are people who ignite change through creative thought and creative behavior (Harding, 2010). Creative thinking involves using one's imagination to come up with multiple solutions to an unanswered question to find one that drives thought into action. The process of creative cognition often requires challenging the status quo. Once multiple solutions have been proposed through the imaginative process, a leader must use his wisdom, experience, and courage to choose a solution that makes most sense given the context. Acting creatively requires that an individual remain flexible in pursuit of his goal, keeping in mind that his chosen solution may not succeed in the real world. The leader that behaves creatively can roll with the punches and revisit alternative solutions in the face of adversity. Harding (2010) suggests that great creative leaders not only depend on their own creative thought and behavior but also enlist others to participate in the creative process and its implementation. By enlisting the help of others in this exercise and by arming himself with creative solutions generated by a group, it is

hypothesized that the participant will be in a better position to challenge traditional assumptions than he would be if he was to do so alone.

**Recommendation #2: In consideration of a personal goal, answer the following questions:**

**(1) What do you value most about yourself? What are the core factors that energize you?**

**What would you describe as being a high-point in your life?**

**(2) Imagine that you have awakened from a long, deep sleep. When you wake up, you realize that everything is as you always hoped and dreamed it would be. Your ideal state is now a reality. What do you see? How have things changed?**

**(3) What three wishes do you have for your future?**

**Now, based on your answers above, create a plan of action in pursuit of your goal that incorporates (1) what is best about you, (2) what needs changing, and (3) what you hope for the future.**

Cooperrider et al. (2008) identify three key contributing characteristics of visionary organizations: continuity, novelty, and transition. Research has shown that visionary leaders learn from the best of what has happened in the past and execute in the present accordingly. In other words, visionary leaders are continuous in their actions when they work. Visionary leaders are also able to be creative and to develop new ideas when past strategies have failed them or are no longer effective. Lastly, visionary leaders implement concrete behavioral and strategic changes when new ideas are adopted so that the envisioned future can be realized. The appreciative inquiry process operationalizes all three of these factors contributing to visionary leadership (Cooperrider et al., 2008). Recommendation #2 is adapted from the foundational questions that

Cooperrider et al. suggests asking oneself to create continuity, novelty, and transition in one's leadership approach. By completing this exercise, it is hypothesized that the participant will challenge traditional assumptions that he identifies as no longer working for him as he considers his future goal.

### **Conclusion**

Positive psychology and work-life integration may be mutually satisfying fields of study. As demonstrated by the recommendations made for positive interventions to improve work-life integration in this paper, positive psychology can contribute to an individual's ability to create four-way wins and to live a more integrated life. At the same time, the process of integrating one's life across all domains enables an individual to live more authentically which can lead to the realization of the good life. Future implications of this preliminary inquiry into how positive psychology and work-life integration relate to each other include but are not limited to: empirical validation of the recommendations made in this paper and further scientific exploration of how work-life integration and human flourishing are related. Integration requires commitment, determination, and hard work, but with an open mind and a creative spirit, change is possible. As for Emily, the key for her was to let go of how she had been juggling all of her responsibilities as separate entities and to acknowledge how those responsibilities were interconnected as parts of something much larger, the flourishing life that she envisioned for herself.

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## Appendix

### Leadership Skills The Enhance Work-Life Integration (Total Leadership Inc., 2008)

#### **Be Real: Act with Authenticity by Clarifying What's Important**

1. Aligns actions with values.
2. Knows what matters.
3. Conveys values with stories
4. Envisions legacy.
5. Is accountable.
6. Embodies values consistently.

#### **Be Whole: Act with Integrity by Respecting the Whole Person**

7. Helps others.
8. Clarifies expectations.
9. Builds networks of support
10. Transfers skills across domains
11. Manages boundaries intelligently.
12. Fits domains together.

#### **Be Innovative: Act with Creativity by Experimenting with How Things Get Done**

13. Is open to new way of doing things.
14. Focuses on results, not time.
15. Embraces change courageously.
16. Demonstrates eagerness to learn.

17. Resolves conflicts among domains creatively.

18. Challenges traditional assumptions.