

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AT THE MOVIES FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND FAMILIES

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What? Parents and children share the same goal—to live 'the good life.' Children learn in part from what they see and hear, whether modeling behavior, reading books, or viewing movies.

Why? Character strengths are foundational to well-being, and movies are a rich source with which to build character strengths and hence enhance flourishing. However, minimal resources exist for parents on how to use this powerful tool with their children and teenagers.

Movies as Positive Media

- Cinematic Elevation—the ability of movies to promote altruism
- Cinematic Admiration—the ability of movies to promote self-improvement
- Entertainment—Education—movies may influence behaviors of health promotion

Movie Narratives Stimulate Emotions—which influence learning and behavior.

- Short term, hedonic behavior change: positive affect
- Long term, eudaimonic behavior change: insight and meaning

Immersion into a Character in a Movie

- Allows the viewer to live the experiences of the character without having to experience real-life consequences
- Increases empathy, and perhaps tolerance

Movies Build Character Strengths

- Strengths-spotting
- Overuse and Underuse
- Discussion Prompts
- Positive Interventions

Criteria for an Optimal Positive Psychology Film (Niemiec & Wedding, 2014)

1. Character displays (at least) one of the 24 strengths in the VIA Classification
2. Character faces obstacles, adversity, or conflict while expressing the strength
3. Character overcomes obstacles or builds/maintains the strength
4. The film overall is inspiring, uplifting in tone or mood, or reflects the human condition.

VIRTUE: Wisdom

- CREATIVITY** Labyrinth
- CURIOSITY** The Croods
- JUDGMENT** Juno
- LOVE OF LEARNING** The Ramen Girl
- PERSPECTIVE** Peaceful Warrior

VIRTUE: Courage

- BRAVERY** Brave
- PERSEVERANCE** Life of Pi
- HONESTY** Moonrise Kingdom
- ZEST** Up

VIRTUE: Humanity

- LOVE** Frozen
- KINDNESS** How to Train Your Dragon
- SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE** The Princess Bride



VIRTUE: Justice

- TEAMWORK** The LEGO Movie
- FAIRNESS** Wreck-It Ralph
- LEADERSHIP** 42

VIRTUE: Temperance

- FORGIVENESS** Mean Girls
- HUMILITY** The Ringer
- PRUDENCE** The Secret Life of Walter Mitty
- SELF-REGULATION** Fantastic Mr. Fox

VIRTUE: Transcendence

- APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE** Cirque du Soleil; Worlds Away
- GRATITUDE** Coraline
- HOPE** Tangled
- HUMOR** Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium
- SPIRITUALITY** Heaven is for Real