There is a scientific field of study that focuses on optimal human functioning—providing skills that cultivate happiness and better living. It's called positive psychology.

In contrast with traditional psychology that focuses on pathology—alleviating neuroses, anxiety, and depression—Positive Psychology focuses on individual and societal flourishing, on nurturing happiness, strengths, self-esteem, and optimism.

Certificate in Whole Person Positive Psychology (CiPP)
The Certificate in Whole Person Positive Psychology provides an introduction to the core concepts and fundamental principles of Positive Psychology, including its philosophical approach and its practical applications.

Through interactive online modules and webinars, personal and group coaching, as well as two residential intensives, the certificate program contributes to the well-being and success of the participant, and provides tools to help others fulfill their potential.

Throughout the 12-month program, participants explore the research and practice that make up the foundation of Positive Psychology. They engage in the processes and practices of Positive Psychology and learn how to

- Develop self-efficacy and grounded optimism
- Discover a higher purpose and set concrete goals in relation to that purpose
- Make the most of the mind-body connection to enhance physical and mental health
- Enhance positive emotions and navigate painful ones
- Cultivate healthy personal and professional relationships while learning the art and science of coaching and teaching
- Explore how Positive Psychology contributes to the art and science of leadership
- Bring lasting change to individuals and organizations

Hours
This certificate program includes 138 contact hours comprising two residential intensives, regular online pre-recorded lectures, and a final project. The course also includes 147 hours of non-contact hours—regular peer group sessions, live Q&A sessions with faculty, and self-directed study, homework and reading assignments, as well as development of a personal home practice to reinforce learning. Total contact and content hours are estimated to take six hours per week to complete.

Prerequisites: Associates degree or comparable life experience.

Learning Objectives
Following their studies, participants are able to

- Understand the fundamental ideas of Positive Psychology and how these ideas can radically change the way we relate to ourselves and others
- Increase the "positivity ratio" as a means toward higher levels of creativity, motivation, health, and overall success in individuals, groups, and organizations
Learning Objectives (con’t)

- Use a variety of scientifically proven techniques from within the Positive Psychology toolbox that can lead to lasting change rather than a temporary high
- Practice the art and science of effective communication—how to present ideas with authenticity to individuals and groups
- Bring out the best in oneself and others by employing a strengths-based approach to leadership
- Coach individuals and groups in the art and science of optimizing human functioning, leading to healthier and happier work and home environments
- Understand the key drivers of healthy and happy interpersonal relationships, and learn how to apply this understanding to one’s own and others’ relationships
- Practice and teach a variety of mind-body techniques that help enhance physical and mental health
- Learn to systematically progress through the evidence-based coaching process towards the realization of one’s own and others’ life goals and objectives.

Who Should Take This Course
This program is specifically for, but not limited to, social workers, psychologists, coaches, Allied health professionals, yoga teachers, school teachers, and managers.

The program is suitable for those interested in

- Introducing Positive Psychology into organizations, from schools to businesses
- Improving their leadership and parenting capabilities
- Realizing more of their own and others’ potential for well-being and success
- Facilitating workshops and conducting lectures in the field of Positive Psychology
- Becoming a better life coach and learning about life coaching (note: this program does not offer life-coaching certification)

Required Components
Two residential, 5-day immersions
Eight online modules, including a final project

To complete and pass this certificate program, participants must

- Not miss more than two sessions during each 5-day residential immersion without consent of program faculty
- Participate in no less than 85 percent of the contact hours
- Complete the final project
- Complete a course evaluation.

Program Dates
Please refer to www.wholebeinginstitute.com/cipp for the program dates available.
Module Design
Each module includes approximately six hours of online pre-recorded video lectures; two live, hour-long Q&A sessions; and 2.5 hours of peer-coaching groups. Participants can also expect approximately 9.5 hours of homework during each module. Cultivating a personal practice begins in Module 3 which accounts for five hours each in Modules 3–9.

For each online module, requirements include watching the video lectures, reading assigned material, participating in small group work, and completing a reflection paper that shows understanding as well as application of the content. Just as the name implies, the reflection paper is a chance for the students to reflect upon the presented material. Students will be given guidance at the end of each class for specific instructions about the reflection paper. Using a journal-style approach, students will write a short essay (approximately 500 words) about how the content material relates to their life. The reflection papers are designed to take the material from the academic and into the individual experience. Reflection papers are submitted online in the forum area within the virtual classroom to be shared in the small coaching groups.

Residential Immersion Design
The weekly learning schedule has a total of 40 hours, including class time, yoga and movement, and healthy, nutritious meals. Specific components of the immersion include experiential exercises, journaling, discussion of material, and first-hand practice in teaching, coaching, and presenting Positive Psychology precepts. Peer study groups are formed at the first immersion, about halfway through the week. The purpose of the study group is to help you learn, to apply what you have learned, and for support, accountability, and feedback.

Reading List
The CIPP reading consists of books and academic articles that directly support the video lectures. They are recommended (not required) for developing an in-depth understanding of positive psychology as well as a basis for supporting the student's final project.

We expect students to be well read in the material that most calls to them. Some resources may be more fully explored than others. The student is given freedom within the recommended readings to delve into those that best suit personal and professional interests.

Course books can be purchased online. Most articles will be hyperlinked directly from the virtual classroom. Those that have copyright restrictions can be purchased online via a link provided in the classroom. We anticipate that students will spend $200–$250 on reading materials.

Module 1: Introduction to Positive Psychology


**Module 2: Onsite Residential Immersion (no readings)**

**Module 3: What Is Happiness?**


**Module 4: Realizing Dreams**


**Module 5: Change**


**Module 6: The Mind-Body Connection**


**Module 7: Relationships**


**Module 8: Positive Psychology Coaching**


**Module 9: Choice and Co-Creating Our Reality**


**Module 10: Onsite Residential Immersion, no readings**
Module Syllabus

Module 1: Introduction to Positive Psychology

This module introduces the emerging field of Positive Psychology—the scientific study of optimal human functioning. Students are exposed to the theoretical and practical implications of a positive focus; the positivity ratio; dealing with painful emotions through acceptance, gratitude and appreciation; and attaining lasting change.

Objectives and Outcomes

- Understand the fundamental ideas of Positive Psychology—and how changing our mindset can change the way we relate to ourselves and others
- Increase the "positivity ratio" as a means toward higher levels of creativity, motivation, health, and overall success—in individuals, groups, and organizations
- Understand the role of acceptance—of one's own and others' emotions—for leading a full and fulfilling life
- Recognize the importance of regularly expressing gratitude and maintaining a positive focus by being a "benefit finder"
- Learn about the roles of rituals and habits in bringing about lasting change.

Reading Resources

Class 1: Introduction
This class introduces Positive Psychology and its relationship to the rest of the field of psychology. It illustrates the importance of positive questions and how these can change the way we research, intervene in organizations, and experience ourselves and our relationships. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following reading:


Class 2: Positive Transformation
The class explores recent research on the causal relationship between success and happiness, and then addresses how increasing the positivity ratio can lead to a tipping point that radically transforms the way we think, feel, and act. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following reading:


Class 3: Permission to Be Human
This class introduces the idea of active acceptance, showing its implications for parenting, leadership, morality, and overall well-being. Accepting our emotions—painful and pleasurable—is the foundation of a healthy and happy life. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


Class 4: Appreciating Appreciation
In this class, students are exposed to studies on gratitude and benefit-finding. Research on the psychological and physiological benefits of a positive focus is explored. Class assignment includes a reflection paper and the following reading:


Class 5: Change that Lasts
Most individual and organizational change-efforts fail. Drawing on research on habits and rituals, this class looks at how a person and an organization can introduce change that lasts. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following reading:


Module 2: Onsite Residential Immersion
This module moves the class from an online experience to a community of support, setting the stage for the group work to come. Peer groups of six are created during this time, and students leave with a plan of action for instituting positive habits through the 30-day challenge and a group-determined structure for the peer communications.

Objectives and Outcomes
- Learn about the history of positive psychology
- Discover one’s ideal self by identifying one’s core values
- Learn about and practice effective listening
- Understand the antecedents of resilience
- Experience as well as gain a rudimentary understanding of Yogaspire and Let Your Yoga Dance®
- Become acquainted with the basic idea behind systems thinking and understand its relevance for a full and fulfilling life
- Understand the essence of effective leadership—knowing oneself and being oneself
- Gain experience using tools for self awareness and self development, including sentence completion, meditation, and journaling
- Explore the idea of reminders and how these are necessary for the cultivation of habits of thought and behavior

Module 3: What Is Happiness?
This module begins by defining happiness as the overall experience of meaning and pleasure. Students are then introduced to the theory and practice of leading a happy life, one that combines positive emotions and a sense of purpose. Topics covered include finding flow, identifying our purpose, dealing with stress and procrastination, and the happiness revolution.

Objectives and Outcomes
- Understand the nature of a happy life, distinguishing it from the life of the rat-racer, the hedonist, and the resigned individual
- Learn how to increase the likelihood of flow in one’s life—the state of peak performance and peak experience
- Go through a four-stage process of identifying and realizing one’s purpose
• Discover how to overcome some of the most significant barriers to happiness by effectively dealing with stress and procrastination
• Recognize how a change in perception can bring about a quiet revolution that will lead to an abundance of the ultimate currency—happiness

Reading Resources

Class 1: Defining Happiness
This class introduces the definition of happiness as the overall experience of meaning and pleasure. Four archetypes are described—the rat-racer, hedonist, resigned, and happy—each capturing a different approach to, and experience of, life. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


Class 2: Flow
Flow describes the state in which we’re fully engaged in an activity, losing track of time and place. The class explores how we can increase the likelihood of entering the flow state—by setting compelling goals and challenging ourselves—and as a result enjoy peak experience and peak performance. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


Class 3: Meaning and Purpose
We're living in an age of nihilism—and we're paying the price for this lack of meaning in our lives. This class takes us through the four stages of finding and realizing our purpose—stages that mirror the process of Appreciative Inquiry. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


Class 4: Stress and Procrastination
Stress and procrastination are two of the most significant barriers to a happy life. This class provides useful techniques for reducing procrastination (such as the "five-minute takeoff") and for dealing with stress (introducing regular recovery periods). In the long term, applying these techniques can help a person become happier and more successful. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:
Class 5: The Happiness Revolution
The shift from material perception (seeing money or goods as the highest value) to happiness perception (seeing happiness as the highest on the hierarchy of values) leads to a radically different approach to life. This class looks at the implications of the shift in perception for our personal relationships and international relationships, for our system of education and our business organizations. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:


Module 4: Realizing Dreams
We all have dreams and aspirations, however most people's dreams remain unrealized. This module looks at how we can cultivate the seed of hope and help it flourish. Topics covered include beliefs as self-fulfilling prophecies, setting goals, focusing on personal strengths, and learning from failure.

Objectives and Outcomes
• Understand the power of positive beliefs and how our beliefs can create our reality
• Learn how to raise our self-confidence, and transform our belief in ourselves, through action, visualization, and priming
• Recognize the importance of identifying intrinsic strengths and extrinsic strengths in fulfilling personal and organizational potential
• Understand the nature of self-concordant goals—goals that are aligned with a person's interests and values—and recognize their importance in leading a happy and successful life
• Accept the significant role that failure plays on the path toward success and happiness

Reading Resources
Class 1: Beliefs as Self-Fulfilling Prophecies
Henry Ford noted that "Whether you think you can or can't—you are right." There is much research evidence illustrating that, at least to an extent, Ford was right. This class addresses the power of the mind while at the same time clearly distinguishing between realistic and unrealistic beliefs, between grounded and detached optimism, between adopting the insights of experimental psychology and blindly following the cult of positive thinking. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following article:


Class 2: Raising Beliefs
While our beliefs have an enormous impact on the way we experience our lives and how well or poorly we fare, cultivating these beliefs can be very difficult. This class addresses three approaches to raising a person's self-efficacy: taking action through coping, visualizing successful process and outcome, and creating an environment with positive primes. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following readings:


Class 3: Self-Concordant Goals
Self-concordant goals align with our primary interests and deepest values. People who identify and pursue these goals end up being happier and more successful. This class addresses the distinction between perceiving one's work as a job, a career, or a calling—with all the implications of this perception. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following reading:


Class 4: Strengths
Most people, when asked to choose between focusing on their strengths or focusing on their weaknesses, pick the latter. However, studies in individuals and organizations clearly demonstrate that focusing on strengths does not only make people happier, it makes them more successful. This class focuses on how we can identify our extrinsic and intrinsic strengths—those activities that we're good at and also passionate about. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following reading:


Class 5: Learning from Failure
We learn to walk by falling, to talk by babbling, to eat by making a mess, to shoot a basket by missing, and to color the inside of a square by scribbling outside the box. This class looks at research and case studies of successful individuals and organizations whose guiding principle
is, "Learn to fail or fail to learn." Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


**Module 5: Change**

Most change-efforts fail. A great deal of money and effort is spent by individuals and organizations attempting to bring about change, and yet what we mostly witness is the "honeymoon effect"—the intervention having only a temporary, short-lived effect. In this module—drawing on the latest research in neuroscience and techniques spanning the ABCs of psychology (affect, behavior, cognition)—students learn how to bring about personal and organizational change that lasts.

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Understand the nature of change on the neural level, and how certain conscious and unconscious barriers come in the way of enjoying lasting change
- Learn techniques that help us work through our emotions—such as the Positivity Portfolio and the Post Peak Experience Order—and can bring about gradual and acute change
- Explore various behavioral interventions—such as engaging in deliberate practice and exiting our comfort zone—that can bring about gradual and acute change
- Engage our thoughts—through cognitive therapeutic techniques and the Eureka experience—as means toward bringing about gradual and acute change
- Bring together the ABCs of psychology—using different journaling techniques, for example—that can help move us beyond the honeymoon effect

**Reading Resources**


**Class 1: The Nature of Change**

Change is hard—and yet possible. Merely understanding the anatomy of change—how neural networks form and develop—can help in the process of bringing about change that lasts. This class looks into some of the barriers to change, including our degrees of willingness to change, our levels of motivation, and whether we consciously or unconsciously believe that change is
possible. Class assignment includes a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:


Class 2: Affect
This class looks at the emotional channels for bringing about change. Techniques explored include Loving Kindness Meditation, the Positivity Portfolio, mindful listening to music, and slowing down to appreciate and savor the world. In addition, the idea of Post Peak Experience Order is introduced as a method of acute emotional change, providing a counter example to the negative acute change brought about through posttraumatic stress disorder. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


Class 3: Behavior
The most effective way to bring about lasting change is to modify our behaviors. Engaging in deliberate and persistent practice, while allowing time for rest and recovery, is the combination that yields long-term improvement in one's chosen field. Coping by getting out of one's comfort zone is a more acute and immediate way of using behavior to bring about change. Class assignments include a reflection paper and reading from the following book:


Class 4: Cognition
Our thoughts impact our feelings and behaviors. This class introduces the basic ideas that make cognitive therapy so effective, while illustrating how in each moment of our lives we make choices that impact the quality of the next moment and potentially beyond. The Eureka Experience is provided as an example of acute change. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:


Class 5: Combining the ABCs
It is difficult to move against the force of habit to alter emotional, behavioral, and cognitive patterns that have been ingrained over time. Journaling is a technique that combines the ABCs (affect, behavior, cognition) and can therefore help overcome the force of habit and bring about lasting change. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following readings:
Over the past few decades Western scientists and practitioners have become increasingly interested in the mind-body connection. This module introduces well-researched and thoroughly validated tools and techniques that can enhance the quality of our lives. Topics include mindfulness meditation, physical exercise, nutrition, sleep, and human touch.

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Understand how mind and body are interconnected, and how each psychological state has its physiological corollary
- Learn scientifically validated tools and techniques that rely on mindfulness meditation.
- Explore the effect physical exercise has on our emotions and the latest research on constructing an exercise regime
- Recognize the impact of nutrition on our overall mental and physical state, and learn a few basic rules that can lead to a healthier and happier life
- Understand the impact that sleep, or the lack of it, has on our physical and mental health, and learn how to enjoy better and more efficient sleep

**Reading Resources**


**Class 1: Connecting Mind and Body**

Since Renee Descartes, the West has struggled to reconcile mind and body, perceiving the two as separate and irreconcilable entities. However, over the past few decades, an increasing amount of research is showing that our minds and bodies are, in fact, interconnected—changing the way we think impacts our physiology, and changing our physiology directly affects the way we think. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:

Class 2: Physical Exercise
Regular physical exercise can have a similar effect as some of the most powerful psychiatric medications—in dealing with depression, anxiety, attention deficit disorder, and other conditions. This class explores the impact of different forms of physical activity on our well-being by looking at aerobic and anaerobic exercises as well as heart-rate coherence and variability. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:


Class 3: Mindfulness
Mindfulness practices have been an integral part of most Eastern and Western religions. However, only recently has modern science caught up with ancient traditions, proving that engaging in various meditation practices can literally transform the way we perceive, feel, and act. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


Class 4: Healthy Eating and Rest
Nature can potentially provide the nourishment for a healthier and happier life. In the modern world, we have lost touch with nature, and are abusing our minds and bodies through unhealthy eating. This class explores a few simple practices and ideas—such as the glycemic index and the inherent qualities of particular foods—that can bring about a radical change in the way we feel both physically and psychologically.

A human being needs rest and recovery for optimal psychological and physiological functioning. In the modern world, we tend to abuse our minds and bodies by not creating sufficient time for recovery. This class also explores the research on the sleep cycle, the idea of a biphasic sleep, and the importance of getting a good night’s sleep (and naps, when possible). Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:

Class 5: Touch

Human beings need touch; it is essential component of well-being at any age. In this high-tech time, we've lost touch with touch. This class explores the research of touch, including the physiological and psychological responses to touch.

Module 7: Relationships

Relationships are the number one generator of well-being; gone awry, they produce pain and misery. This module attempts to distinguish between myths and facts in the realm of relationships—whether between lovers, friends, family members, as well as teachers and students. It introduces the science behind this seemingly elusive realm, without extinguishing its allure and beauty.

Objectives and Outcomes

• Understand the key drivers of healthy and happy interpersonal relationships, and learn how to apply this understanding to one’s own and others’ relationships
• Increase intimacy in a relationship by shifting the focus from the need to be validated to the focus on knowing and being known
• Learn the 5:1 positivity ratio and how to use disagreements, disputes, and serious gridlocks as fuel for growth
• Recognize the importance of a positive focus within a relationship and practice active constructive responding
• Going through the process of differentiation as a way of progressing from dependent self-esteem to independent and unconditional self-esteem

Reading Resources

Class 1: Learning from Thriving Relationships
Relationships are the number one generator of the ultimate currency. However, they can also be the source of much unhappiness. Most long-term relationships either end, or they continue devoid of joy and passion. Using the approach of Positive Psychology this class addresses the lessons learned from relationships that thrive. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following:


Class 2: Being Known & Conflict
There is a common misconception that the most difficult—and important—part of a happy relationship is finding Mr. or Mrs. Right. This misconception comes from the movies, where after some trials and tribulations, the curtains close and the protagonists live happily ever after. However, movies end where love begins: the most important part of a thriving relationship is the work done once one is in a relationship. This class looks at what it means to invest in one’s relationship, and thereby to increase the likelihood of living happily ever after.

Another common misconception concerning relationships is that the most important component of lasting love is the ability to unconditionally accept, and be accepted by, one’s partner. However, as the work of David Schnarch and other researchers shows, more important than validation is “knowing and being known.” Getting to know one’s partner, and revealing oneself to one’s partner, is the way to cultivate intimacy in a relationship, and a way to enjoy increasing passion in a long-term relationship. The idea of knowing and being known can be applied to other forms of relationships, whether with family members, students, or friends. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following:


Class 3: Positive Focus
One of the basic tenets of Positive Psychology is that a positive focus creates a positive reality. This idea most certainly applies to relationships: Appreciating those things that work within the relationship and in one’s partner strengthens the bond that exists between partners or friends. This class explores the research illustrating that it is possible to evaluate (and increase) the health of a relationship by looking at its positive-to-negative ratio. One method of increasing this ratio is through active-constructive responding. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book:


**Class 4: Self-esteem**

There is a reciprocal relationship between personal development and the development of one’s relationships. As the psychologist Nathaniel Branden points out, the more independent we become, the more interdependent we can be. This class explores the idea of differentiation, and how the shift from dependent, to independent, and to interdependent self-esteem can provide a healthy foundation for thriving relationships—with oneself and others. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following:


**Class 5: Self-Esteem & Relationships**

Building on the previous lesson, this class explores the role of self-esteem in the context of relationships. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following excerpt:


**Module 8: Positive Psychology Coaching**

Positive Psychology can provide the scientific grounding to coaching, while coaching can be considered the applied arm of Positive Psychology. This module, while drawing on the strengths-based approach as well as solution-focused and evidence-based coaching, looks at a process to help individuals and organizations realize their goals and fulfill their potential.

**Objectives and Outcomes**

- Understand how key ideas and research from Positive Psychology can be applied in the coaching relationship
- Realize more of human potential—bring out the best in oneself and others—by understanding and practicing a strengths-based approach to coaching
- Coach individuals and groups using ideas from solution-focused therapy, leading to healthier and happier work and home environments
- Learn to systematically progress through an evidence-based coaching process, towards the realization of one's own and others' life goals and objectives
- Use storytelling as a means toward bringing about change in others and oneself.
- Practice the art and science of effective listening

**Reading Resources**

Class 1: Evidence-Based Coaching
Coaching is a booming industry. Trainings for coaching are offered around the world, spanning three days to three years. This class addresses the importance of evidence-based coaching—an approach that emphasizes the importance of drawing on research to generate coaching practices. It also focuses on the importance of constant evaluation of one’s own practice and progress. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


Class 2: The Coaching Process
Positive Psychology provides rigorously tested tools and techniques that can be used in coaching. This class focuses on the environment in which a coach functions, and how the coach can use the power of the situation to bring about positive change. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following article:


Class 3: Appreciative Inquiry & Solution Focused Brief Coaching
Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues to bring about positive change in organizations and individuals. Solution Focused Therapy (SFT) was developed by Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer as a form of brief therapy. Similar to AI, SFT focuses on what works; both approaches are now being effectively applied to coaching. This class addresses the approach of Appreciative Inquiry and Solution-Focused coaching, and highlights a few techniques that can be used in parenting, teaching, leading, and, of course, coaching. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


Class 4: Storytelling

Storytelling can be considered the “unified theory of psychology”—we are wired for stories, are moved by stories, and move others through stories. By telling stories, coaches can connect in a meaningful way with their clients; by eliciting empowering stories from their clients, coaches can draw out the best from their clients. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


Class 5: Empathic Listening

Communication lies at the heart of coaching, and while most people naturally develop the ability to communicate, much can go wrong when two individuals—intimates or strangers—meet. One of the most prevalent causes of misunderstanding and conflict between people is having different communication styles. By developing the ability to recognize a person’s style of communication and by cultivating one’s empathic listening skills, many communication-related obstacles can be overcome. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


Module 9: Choose the Life You Want

At every moment in our lives we have a choice. Moments add up to a lifetime; choices add up to a life. This module summarizes the material presented in the previous seven through the choices that we make—whether major choices such as deciding on the kind of work we want to pursue or the kind of person we want to spend our lives with, to minor choices such as the physical posture we choose to assume when walking into a room or the way we respond to a request from a colleague. It is through these choices—major and minor—that we become co-creators of our reality.

Objectives and Outcomes
• Understand how the choices we make form the building blocks of the path our life takes.
• Recognize the impact of our choices on the life we live, and how it is through our choices that we create our own and others’ reality.
• Recognize the impact of our choices on our self-confidence and happiness.
• Learn how having too much choice can also paralyze us, if our objective is maximizing rather than satisfying.

Reading Resources

Class 1: Introduction
People who have an internal locus of control—who believe that their choices rather than luck mostly determine the course of their life—are generally happier, more resilient, and more successful. This class explores the idea that at every moment in our lives we have a choice, and it is the accumulation of these choices that ultimately determine the course our life takes. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:


Class 2: Big Life Choices
This class looks at major decisions that we make in our life and how these impact our overall levels of physical and mental health. The class focuses on three choices in particular: the choice to pursue our calling, the choice to help and contribute, and the choice to be true to ourselves. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following:


Class 3: Specific Situational Choices
This class looks at choices that we have in response to particular situations. The class focuses on the choices that we have when it comes to our emotional reaction to a situation, the choice we have when facing difficulties and hardships, and finally how we choose to treat other people. Class assignments include a reflection paper and the following book:


Class 4: Every-Moment Choices
This class looks at choices we have at every moment in our life. The class focuses on three choices in particular: how we carry ourselves physically, whether or not we choose to appreciate what we have, and choosing to bring more humor and play into our life. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following book and article:

**Class 5: The Limits of Choice**
There can be too much of a good thing; there can be too much choice. Having a great deal of choice can paralyze us, or cause constant dissatisfaction and frustration. When making choices, it is important to shift from maximizing to satisficing—from insisting on a perfect solution to accepting a good enough solution. Class assignments include a reflection paper and excerpts from the following books:


**Module 10: Onsite Residential Immersion**
In this final module, participants move from students to teachers. By synthesizing and summarizing what is personally most compelling about positive psychology via the final project, and presenting to a small group of peers, this module emphasizes the concept of serving it forward—sharing with others key lessons learned. This way, even though the class ends, the impact on the individual and the community continues to move forward.

- Gain some understanding of how social networks function and consequentially recognize the power of the individual to bring about change
- Present final projects and receive feedback
- Go through the "Best Possible Self" exercise as a stepping stone toward setting future goals
- Learn about the connection between cognitive psychology and Buddhism
- Review the tools and techniques that were learned throughout the course
- Revisit systems thinking and learn about the Wholeperson Well-being approach
- Set goals and intentions for the future