

MAPP Alumni Newsletter

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Alumni

 Penn Master of Applied Positive Psychology



this issue

One Million Words P.1
Giving Pos. Psych. Away P.2
The State of Pos. Psych. P.3
2011 MAPP Summit P.4
Alumni Assoc. Fund-raising P.4
IPPA World Congress P.5

One Million Words for Well-being?

By Robert Rebele, MAPP '10

"A deadline is, simply put, optimism in its most ass-kicking form." - Chris Baty

For writers, there are few positive interventions more powerful than a good deadline. Stamping a due date on an essay or article or book in progress can inspire the agency and pathways needed to set so many successive words down on paper. Sure, it will produce some anxiety too. But the net effect of the deadline is significantly positive.

Chris Baty gets this, but he's not an optimism researcher you've never heard of. Baty's wisdom comes instead from the world of application, where for more than 10 years now he has challenged hundreds of thousands of aspiring authors to write a book in a month. Every November, tens of thousands of those authors complete the hardly imaginable task of writing a 50,000 word book in a mere 30 days. These are no Stephen Kings or Michael Crichtons, either. NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) participants tend to be adults with jobs and families and friends...and a nagging, often life-long desire to achieve something big like writing a book. In short, they are a lot like MAPPsters.

Every time I talk to a group of MAPPsters, the conversation inevitably turns to a writing project in process. Collectively we have countless ideas for articles, essays, blogs, and books that will help people flourish and thrive. And while an increasingly impressive number of us have produced some pages that have gone to print or online publication, I know there are many more of us with important things to say.

(Continued on page 3.)

A NEW LOOK

The MAPP Alumni Newsletter now is produced with a new, portrait mode oriented layout. I hope the new look makes for a pleasant reading experience. As always your comments are welcome. - ed.

NOTE THE LINKS

For your convenience web links are provided where you see orange text.



Giving Positive Psychology Away *Challenges and Rewards*

By Greg Quinting, Ph.D., MAPP '07

A good friend of mine, an experienced mechanical engineer working over ten years in Seattle, finally found a job in Connecticut after going unemployed for nearly two years. She loved living in Washington state, for the city, the nearby mountain wilderness and the many friends. They asked her, "Why do you need to move all the way to Connecticut? There are plenty of good jobs in Seattle. Why couldn't you find something here?" To which she said, "The job market is tough, as you know. I tried and tried but nothing turned up, so I had to move. There was no other choice." I guessed that giving such a pessimistic explanation troubled my friend, so I offered an alternative: "The job in Connecticut is a perfect fit for your skills and career. Your new employer really wanted you and values your special abilities. You'll both thrive. Maybe that's along the lines of an explanation for your friends."

This is a call for articles from MAPP Alumni who have stories to share on giving positive psychology away. The spring edition of the Alumni Newsletter with its "A in MAPP" theme led to my introspection about how I applied since graduation what I learned in MAPP. I have mostly given positive psychology away, most often without drawing attention to my doing so. Much in the same way as Alan Foster described so well with his article in our last issue, I rarely use the vernacular we have become accustomed to in MAPP, such as "self-efficacy", "ACT" and "CBT", "appreciative inquiry", and "signature strengths".

If you have a story about how you "gave positive psychology away" to someone close, a colleague, a friend, even a family member and perhaps found yourself drawing upon your newly acquired knowledge in positive psychology – please seriously consider sharing your story with an article for the next newsletter. What challenges did you face perhaps as you gave such a gift of time to

those in your immediate circle? Did you have to refrain from the terminology, as Alan Foster did?

After reading my story above, Bobby Dauman wrote his essay featured in this issue on how he helped a client, who is also a friend. Bobby suggested ways to look beyond the business concerns and come to terms with a family relationship that was holding his friend back. (As is common practice a number of identifying details have been changed or omitted in both stories.)

In the next issue, perhaps as a regular series of articles as Dave Shearon suggested, I am

looking for those on giving positive psychology away, also stories where you applied positive psychology with personal impact on you, the powerful personal moments that likely happen to all MAPP Alumni as you draw on your new skills. Yet, we would not have grown if it were not for the failures: When did you attempt something that seemed a pretty good

idea at the time, but you failed? How did the setback serve as a chance to learn?

Positive psychology is still primarily a serious avocation for me. I wonder if it may be true as well for some of you gentle readers who might be inclined to share your stories on these pages. Positive psychology seems different from many professions. My professional upbringing in chemistry usually has only an indirect, sporadic influence on my personal relationships, (not always for the better, witness my sometimes hampering analytical tendencies) while positive psychology's impact seems rather pervasive and frequent. Most important, I am first a colleague, a friend, and a loving brother and son to my family; yet, my education in MAPP inculcated me with an approach to relationships that I hope enriches them.



[Giving Positive Psychology Away](#)

We're Friends ... Call me.

By Bobby Dauman, MAPP '06

Josh is an extraordinarily successful Real Estate broker who came to me for help to break into the top 50 Real Estate brokers in America. We had great results growing his success from top 250 to top 180 to top 80. But no matter how hard we worked Josh kept sliding back below the top 80. I knew what the challenge was but Josh refused to believe his "compartmentalized, over it," personal life was sabotaging his business goals and would only consult about business. You see, Josh, had a long feud with his brother Alex over a shared, failed business that cost Josh hundreds of thousands. Because of his mismanagement Alex offered to pay Josh back half his losses. But Alex never did, using the relationship, family and continued misfortunes to continually renegotiate the terms. After years of frustration, anger and finally rage Josh vowed the relationship was over, splitting the family. Knowing Josh wouldn't talk on business time I suggested, "Call me whenever you become upset because of Alex." Josh insisted, "Totally unnecessary and wouldn't be fair using your time that way." I returned, "Josh if we hadn't become friends with each other's best interest at heart long ago we couldn't have the success we've had. For friends, I always have time; call me." He did. Through "Three Blessings" first about himself, then in conjunction with remembering and savoring his relationship with Alex at its strongest and most loving, and with the "Best Possible Self" focusing on best possible relationships, Josh came to realize that he would, "rather be kind, forgiving and loving than right." And lo and behold Josh soon cracked the top 50.



One Million Words ... (continued from page 1)

That's why I am proposing an ass-kicking optimism intervention for the MAPP alumni community: **If you've got something you want to write about, join me this November in the crazy task of writing a positive psychology "book" in a month.**

IMaWriMo (International MAPP Writing Month) will borrow from the best of NaNoWriMo to create a month of serious generativity among the MAPP alumni community. Here's how we'll make it work for us:

- *The Deadline:* 30 days of writing, from Nov. 1st to Nov. 30th

- *The Task:* Write 30,000 words. That's 1,000 words per day and about 100-120 typed, double-spaced pages in total.

The Rules:

- ✦ Only words written in November count toward the goal. I recommend starting fresh on Nov. 1st for several reasons, but if you bring an already-started project, only new words will count toward your total.

- ✦ There are no restrictions on format/genre. You can write multiple blogs or a single book. Fiction or non-fiction. For adults or kids. If you write it intentionally for this project, it counts toward your goal.

- ✦ Sharing of writing is completely optional.

Sharing of word counts is NOT. Every writer will be expected to post at least a weekly word count, although I recommend posting daily. That gives you accountability, and it helps give us a shared sense of purpose and progress.

Those are the basic guidelines, and we'll stick to them with relatively few exceptions. One notable exception, however, is that we will also offer a separate track with a 12,000 word target. I encourage

everyone to aim high, but I recognize that some of us will have smaller projects and some will simply have less time. I want the project to be broad enough to accommodate our wide range of projects, but specific enough that we can build a unified hive around our common purpose. Along the way, I will offer a few support structures to help us reach our target:

- ✦ I will set up a space on Ning or a similar site for us to post word counts, have discussions about writing and publishing, and generally stay connected.

- ✦ I will post optional writing prompts twice per week to help keep the words flowing.

- ✦ I will host an optional weekly conference call for participants to reconnect, share successes and challenges, and to energize the group.

I will host a kick-off meeting, either online, during the MAPP summit weekend in Philly, or both.

I originally hoped that at least a few people would join me in this project, but as of this writing we are nearly 30 MAPPsters strong! I started doing the math – if 30 of us manage to hit the 30,000 word target, that's 900,000 words. With hope as one of my top strengths, I started wondering...if only a few more people join us and we produce a few more words each, maybe we could hit 1 million words! One million words for well-being – both for the good of our future readers, and for our own well-being as writers.

If you're interested in joining us in the IMaWriMo endeavor, send Reb (MAPP.5) an email at rwrebele@gmail.com.

In the meantime, happy writing!

THE STATE OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Summary of Sept. 22, 2011 Conference Call with Marty Seligman

By Bobby Dauman, MAPP '06

For those who didn't get to attend Marty's truly remarkable, ground breaking, exciting "State of the Positive Psychology Union" conference call I wanted to repeat all of the exciting details of the new MAPP class and the upcoming 4th Annual MAPP Summit in addition to Marty's extraordinary latest Positive Psychology happenings. Marty talked about the following 6 topics:

1. The dawn of Prospective

Psychology: Do Human Beings prospect and are they drawn by the future? Or are they, as traditionally believed, driven by the past?

2. Brand New Robert Wood

Johnson \$4,200,000 Grant. It would allow a joint venture between UPENN and the Army to ask Positive Health questions using the Army's database, 200X larger than the one used in the famous Framingham Study. The co-principle investigators would be Marty and Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum.

3. New findings on Post Traumatic

Growth, particularly those of UPENN's Ann Marie Roepke

4. Adolescent Positive Health

5. The measurement of PERMA worldwide via Social Media

6. A challenging question: How would you envision and implement a PERMA/Well-Being city and/or state?

For all MAPPsters who either couldn't make the call or want to hear it again the call was recorded and is available on [NING](#).



2011 MAPP Summit

By Debbie Swick, MBA

Associate Director of Education
Positive Psychology Center

We're excited to announce the 4th Annual MAPP Summit on October 28-30, 2011.

It's the weekend of reuniting with old classmates and making new friends, learning from captivating speakers and other impressive alumni, hearing Marty's latest thoughts (always fascinating!), sharing your research and applications through the poster session, exchanging ideas with fellow alumni and MAPP faculty, and connecting with the community that still has the passion of applying positive psychology.

You'll enjoy hearing our special speakers: **Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum**, Director of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program in the U.S. Army. She also has an incredible story as a POW. **David Halpern** is an advisor to the UK Government and his latest book looks at how happiness and the economy interact, how virtue might be supported in people and the impact of inequality and fairness. And one of our highly rated professors, **Angela Duckworth**, will be focusing on her groundbreaking research on grit.

Another special event during the Summit will be a screening of the movie *HAPPY* with director **Roko Belic** joining us for a discussion.

Click [here](#) for the Summit website with the latest information.

MAPP Alumni Association Fundraising Update

By Bobby Dauman, MAPP '06

On September 28, 2011 we announced a new **MAPP Alumni Association Fund Raising Drive** initiative! A new gauntlet was thrown down by an '09er who **generously offered a bonus of \$500 if we can meet our ¾ goal of \$7500 in the next 10 days by October 8th, 2011.** Fortunately, the response has been dramatic. 51 of our generous alumni **had brought us to 55% (\$5510) of our target of raising \$10,000 by Thursday, November 24TH, 2011!**

However, in the past 3 days another 10 of our brother/sister alumni have raised our totals to **\$6485, nearly half our 10 day goal of reaching \$7500 by October 8th!** But what's really awesome how our individual and collective class pride and generosity has kicked in. Last Wednesday '09 still held an edge in percentage of class contributors over '06, '06 had significantly surged ahead in the percentage of contributions per contributor, while '08 and '10 were hotly contesting 3rd place. But in three days all has changed! While '09 still holds an edge in percentage of contributors, '08 and '10 are now ahead of '09 in percentage per contributor and both are now neck and neck with '06 for second place in percentage of class contributors! While congratulations are still in order for '09 and '06 'statistically', '08 and '10 are surging like baseball's Rays and Cardinals! And a special shout out to Eleanor Chin and Louis Alloro for their letter to their class and "Tag: I am a

MAPP contributor," Facebook app respectively! Perhaps I was a bit too proud about my '09 class being able to claim the bragging rights for being the most proud and generous class. No, '08 insists they are and got inspired to prove it. But not so fast '08, only 25% (61) of our 250 Alumni have contributed so far. And we're hoping we reach 100%, \$50 dues participation (remembering that \$50 to continue to contribute to the MAPP community is only 1/10th of 1% of your MAPP tuition) and at least 33% giving additional donations. There is still plenty of time until our Fund Raising Drives ends on my favorite USA holiday, Thanksgiving for any of our classes to prevail.

Let's show our individual, collective and collaborative pride and generosity by hitting the challenge \$7500 goal and thereby with the bonus \$500 added achieve 80% (\$8000) of our \$10,000 goal by October 8th, 2011! Together we can hit and indeed top our \$10,000 goal on the way to accomplishing our other individual and shared goals. **We can do it!** (BTW, there will be special acknowledgements and prizes for the most inspired and generous classes.)

Here's the [link](#) for your dues and to make your donations. Thank you!

[Click Here for
secure PayPal link](#)



IPPA World Congress Report

By Lisa Jacobson, MAPP '08

*Lisa Jacobson is an HR and Career Consultant in Tampa, Florida.
WorkplaceSolutionsTampa.com*

WORKSHOP: Strengths Interventions for Work and Relationships Speaker: Robert Biswas-Diener

I left Tampa, Florida a day early to attend IPPA's pre-workshop **Strengths Interventions for Work and Relationships** presented by Robert Biswas-Diener on Saturday, July 23, 2011. It was well worth the time and effort. Of the many great ideas presented, I am highlighting this idea because it's a familiar practice with a new twist: **Take your Strengths vocabulary to another level. Know and use formal assessments and their standard descriptions as an expert should, but take it a step further, develop a wider, more diverse strengths vocabulary. Here's the why and how.**

Biswas-Diener believes developing an expert vocabulary is a precursor to spotting strengths. One cannot competently diagnose an issue without developing an expert's vocabulary. He illustrates: Imagine going to a mechanic, and the mechanic saying, "I've looked at your car, and this thing-a-ma-jig is not correct, you know the bobber over here, it isn't connected to the wire over there." We want the mechanic to say, "The diodes on your alternator failed, so it's not charging your battery. That's why your car no longer starts." The mechanic has an expert vocabulary. Knowing the words diodes, alternator and battery are crucial to the diagnostic process. An expert vocabulary is also crucial to the strengths diagnostic process. Formal strengths assessments provide basic descriptions. The VIA gives us 24 easy-to-understand words to describe strengths. However, if we measure only 24 strengths,

clients might only see those 24 strengths. Biswas-Diener suggests using formal assessments as launching points and then expanding those into hundreds of strengths. It makes sense to be creative when naming and claiming strengths. Some creative examples follow:

Unique-u-rater - sees uniqueness in situations and people. A woman in the workshop coined this strength. StrengthsFinder2.0 calls this INDIVIDUALIZATION. Realise2 calls this Personalisation.

Dominator – a competitor or warrior that seizes the moment. – A soldier in resilience training called himself a dominator after reading his VIA assessment results. VIA calls this LEADERSHIP, StrengthsFinder2.0 calls it COMMAND. He owned this trait and called it DOMINATOR. This is a great example of strength dynamics and synergy. Dominator is a combination of what VIA calls Leadership and Zeal and StrengthsFinder2.0 calls Competition. Realise2 calls this Drive and Competitor.

Brad-Fucious – The origin of this strength comes from this comment posted on the Facebook wall of one of my younger clients: "Brad-fucius droppin' knowledge." It's a friend's response to Brad's frequent postings of maxims and aphorisms. Brad, AKA, BRAD-FUCIOUS has an insatiable urge to collect and share knowledge. BRAD-FUCIOUS is a composite of VIA strengths: Input, Love of learning, and wisdom and knowledge. It's a good example of how clients can have fun and engage with their of strengths. Nicknaming strengths is a fun and effective way to encourage naming and claiming strengths.

So let's have fun with this. Anyone want to share his/her special strength labels? Can anyone beat "Brad-Fucious"?