

# MAPP Alumni Magazine

Published by and for Alumni of the Penn Master of Applied Positive Psychology

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# mapp

Alumni

 Penn Master of Applied Positive Psychology



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

By Lisa Sansom, MAPP '10

In Fall 2005, the first students in the Master of Applied Positive Psychology degree program showed up on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. The modern-day field of applied positive psychology wasn't even a decade old, building on the thinking, insights and research of psychologists and philosophers from decades and centuries and millennia earlier. When this first class graduated, they became true pioneers and set out to educate the world about positive psychology, and also created the foundations of an alumni association that, unbeknownst to them, would continue to grow and flourish, just as the field of positive psychology has thrived as well.

Today, our Alumni Association has over 400 members and the MAPP program continues to accept students every year. Today, our graduates span the globe and nearly every continent (no penguins yet) and we are always inventing and creating new ways to stay in touch - new ways to further our Alumni Association to help members stay connected to



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## PREZ MESSAGE *continued*

the research and to resources and to relationships.

The MAPP Magazine has existed before and was a beneficial platform to keep alumni connected and aware. However, over time, other priorities and communication tools came into being, and the Magazine went dormant. We are so excited to bring it back under the able Editor-ship of Jim Rink, a professional editor and writer who is supporting our Alumni Association with his able skills and keen eye.

While the (usually) weekly NewsBrief and occasional NewsBlasts share timeline information in brief bursts about conferences, opportunities and MAPP alumni happenings, the Magazine will come out quarterly and will feature in-depth stories about MAPP alumni who are putting the A into MAPP - applying positive psychology in real-world situations, sometimes so quietly that we never hear about them otherwise, yet their positive power ripples and transforms.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and will consider submitting further ideas for stories - who are the quiet appliers of positive psychology from your class? from your field? from your geography? Who would you like to learn more about? When we connect as a community, we are stronger and together we can increase the tonnage of well-being in the world.

Wishing you all flourishing and thank you for doing good out there,

*Lisa Sansom*

and the MAPP Alumni Association



700 Sansom St.

Photo courtesy of Kevin Wohlgenuth

### **Richard Le Preserves a Way of Life**

In the "original" capitol of the United States, home of the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, self-employed preservationist Richard Le (MAPP '07) has resurrected a piece of history at 700 Sansom St. in Philadelphia. But more than that, he has resurrected a way of life.

At Jewelers Row in Washington Square a series of buildings is threatened with destruction to make way for a 29-story residential tower. In 2008, Le purchased the only remaining building representing the identical row houses built by Thomas Carstairs in the early 19th century.

"I bought the building to ensure that people understood the notion that Philadelphia was the world's workshop in the 1900s," said Le. "This living history is being taken away, supplanted by condos and other types of development."

In addition to preserving the building itself, Le is working with stakeholders in the community who respect Jewelers Row to attract and promote tradespeople and craftsmen who have been making or repairing jewelry for four or five generations and represent a living history.

"My focus is that we actually value the people who worked on the Row," said Le. "It's about creating a handmade original product and having a relationship with real people. So much of commerce today is threatened by the forces of online commerce and big box retailers."

In keeping with his life's work, Le became interested in the MAPP program because he saw that it was "very focused on preserving things that are going right."

"What attracted me was the science behind how to better engage in the world using your own strengths and valuing those strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive."



## RICHARD LE continued

Like so many others who went through the MAPP program, Le cites Dr. Christopher Peterson as a mentor. "He was the creator of the 24-character strengths profile," said Le. "They include such attributes as 'zest for life,' 'appreciation of beauty and excellence,' 'curiosity,' wisdom and perspective.' He was a delightful man. He not only studied it, he lived it."

"Marty Seligman and James Pawelski were excellent mentors. I owe a lot to Chris, James and Marty. They had a lot of faith to study something that was still developing and unfolding. When I look back and think about all the things that have been published, quantified and analyzed, it's truly amazing."

Since his graduation from MAPP, Richard Le has taken more of a hands-on approach to positive psychology. Ironically, Philadelphia was a city in decline until recently and there is now a strong interest in living in the city. But that renewed interest means luxury apartments, new development and a potential wrecking ball for historic buildings and family-run businesses like those in Jewelers Row.

"It's difficult to say what will happen in the future," said Le. "You can go to a big retailer anywhere in the country; you can't find locally made products with ties to the community anywhere but in that community."

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Dana Arakawa

## For Dana Arakawa Positive Psychology is Personal

Dana Arakawa (MAPP '06) has spent a lot of time in the Honolulu area, growing up there, completing her Ph.D. at the University of Hawaii and now, most recently, teaching AP Psychology at Punahou School, which President Obama attended from 5th grade through graduation.

It was her devotion to her mother, who had a 10-year conflict with cancer, that kept her close and opened her eyes to the possibilities surrounding positive psychology.

"I was seeking something because she was sick," said Arakawa, who began her academic career at Georgetown (Washington, D.C.), majoring in Economics. "I became more interested (in positive psychology) the more I read.

It's still a process. She passed away seven years ago. MAPP was part of how I kept informed, how I looked at the world. It's the study of how life goes well. It's a look at what works."

"It takes effort," she added. "We tend to turn our attention to look at what works. In this way, we can make intentional choices and structure activities to improve our lives. There is scientific evidence behind this."

When Arakawa returned to Hawaii in 2010 with her Ph.D., her original interest was in applied psychology in the workplace. She has worked as an organizational consultant in the VA Healthcare system and was offered a role as a Senior Consultant at Kaiser Permanente. Ultimately, she chose the K-12 classroom, where she teaches college-level coursework. In the classroom, Arakawa is focused on the whole student, not just grades. "It's all about social/emotional skills," she said, "human flourishing."

Arakawa is devoted to the science behind positive psychology and cites Dr. John Gottman's "Magic Ratio" (5:1) as an example. According to Gottman, assuming there are five times as many positive interactions between (romantic) partners as there are negative, the relationship is likely to be healthy or rewarding.

Arakawa's dissertation advisor, renowned social psychologist Elaine Hatfield, studied romantic love in the 1970s. Hatfield, along with Chris Peterson and James Pawelski, were among her mentors as



## DANA ARAKAWA *continued*

she matriculated through the inaugural MAPP graduating class.

Arakawa notes that, while she was visiting a MAPP classmate in Barcelona in March her (Arakawa's) puppy passed away. She knows another MAPP member who does work on grieving. "It's something I have an interest in," she said, "The process of loss." Most likely, if she pursues this interest in loss, we will all end up with something to gain.

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Dana Arakawa earned her Ph.D. in social psychology at the University of Hawaii. Her dissertation looked at the effect of mood on emotional contagion. Before venturing into psychology, Dana graduated with honors from Georgetown University with a B.S. in International Economics and spent a year in Buenos Aires as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar.

Her past research on team performance has appeared in the *Gallup Management Journal* and *International Coaching Psychology Review*, as well as publications in Latin America. The *Gallup Management Journal*, "It Pays to be Optimistic," is a summary of her MAPP capstone work with Margaret Greenberg.

Originally from Honolulu, Dana has taught several courses at the University of Hawaii, including general psychology, statistics for the social sciences, and positive psychology.

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Radhika Punshi

## Radhika Punshi Steers The Talent Enterprise

As managing director of The Talent Enterprise, a human capital 'think' and 'do' tank she co-founded in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Radhika Punshi (MAPP '07) draws a great deal upon the concepts of positive psychology in her daily work.

"I find people are curious and attracted to positive psychology wherever I go because at the heart of it – it appeals to the best in us," she said. "How do we actually get there in real life and make an impact in our lives individually and organizationally? At The Talent Enterprise, we work across 12 countries, with governments, organizations and educators on their most pressing human capital priorities.

Radhika's company is leading many large scale national projects of significance, including working with the government of Saudi Arabia. Punshi's company has developed positive education based, youth development programs targeting 60,000 students in 1,000 schools who are preparing for the world of work.

"We have quite a few of these incredible youth programs we're developing in the Middle East, where we're partnering with governments and foundations," she said. "The programs can be from four days to eight weeks long and are localized to the regional culture and delivered in English & Arabic. We take concepts such as resilience, grit and growth mindset and create local content which is taught in a socio-culturally relevant way to young people. A lot of the work is related to employability and strengths-based career guidance. In keeping with the science, we have also ensured a rigorous process of research and impact evaluation in all our programs."

According to Punshi, the programs include faculty and parents — the whole ecosystem — and is based on individual student strengths. In the region, parents have a huge role to play in the career choices students make.



## **RADHIKA PUNSHI** continued

A concept even more familiar to students of positive psychology might be the company's series of psychometric assessments known as the Thriving Index. According to Punshi, the Thriving Index is a series of assessment tools which measure strengths and work orientations, with a focus on emerging markets. They are being used by over 100+ global and local companies, including the UAE government as part of their national happiness agenda. The assessments are being applied to leadership development, coaching, team development and generally how to build on core strengths. Among some of the key issues facing the human resources/popular psychology field today, Punshi shared four major concerns:

- Too much focus on leaders and not enough on followers
- Increased need for diversity and multiple nationalities working together
- How to demonstrate business impact, quantify results (of HR/PS programs)
- In places such as India and UAE, positive psychology has become increasingly popular, and as we see elsewhere, self-help & pop psychology seems to be taking precedence over science and rigor, and there are very few actively working on research and evidence based practice in this part of the world.

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Radhika Punshi is the co-author of two books titled: *Unlocking the Paradox of Plenty - A Review of the Talent Landscape in the GCC* and *Game-Changers – How Females in the Arab World are Shaping the Future*.

Prior to joining The Talent Enterprise, she was the Head of Applied Research for Aon Hewitt MENA where she conceptualized and led Qudurat, the largest workplace research project in the region.

Punshi advises clients on a wide array of HR topics, including employee engagement, talent assessment and development, performance management and succession planning, large scale transformation and restructuring, communication and change management.

Previously, Punshi worked with Campus Philly in the USA, a not-for-profit organization focused on developing policy recommendations for student retention in Philadelphia. In addition to the MAPP degree, Radhika previously had a Masters and a Bachelors Degree in Organizational Psychology from India. On completing MAPP, Punshi is the first person from the MENASA region to be awarded a degree in Positive Psychology. She served on founding Board of Directors of the prestigious International Positive Psychology Association. She is a frequent commentator in the regional media and speaks regularly at conferences across the world.

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### **Don't Shoot the Second Arrow**

“Buddhists say that any time we suffer misfortune, two arrows fly our way. The first arrow is the actual bad event, which can, indeed, cause pain. The second arrow is the suffering. That's actually optional. The second arrow represents our reaction to the bad event. It's the manner in which we chose to respond emotionally.”

— Susan Bernstein, Executive Coach & Leadership Consultant

## Profit from the Positive Certificate Program Credentialed Coaches Now Earn 10+ Continuing Education Credits

by Margaret H. Greenberg, PCC and Senia Maymin, Ph.D.

Calling all coaches and positive deviants: Our 10-week, Profit from the Certificate Program, rated one of the Top 11 Positive Psychology Courses You Can Take Online, has been accredited and approved for 10.33 continuing coach education credits (9.17 in Core Competencies and 1.16 in Resource Development to be exact) by the International Coach Federation.

Since publishing our book, *Profit from the Positive*, four years ago we have been training leaders, managers, and employees how to apply the science of positive psychology to themselves, their teams, and their organizations both in the U.S. and abroad. Since there are only two of us and we haven't figured out how to be in two places at once, we decided to build a cadre of talented professionals who are well-equipped to train others.

Click here to learn more about our 5th cohort starting October 10, 2017 through December 12, 2017 at 2:00-3:30pmET. Like MAPP, the learning doesn't end when the program ends. We host free, quarterly Learning Community webinars that include graduates from around the world. To date we have 4 continents and 7 countries represented.

### Program Benefits

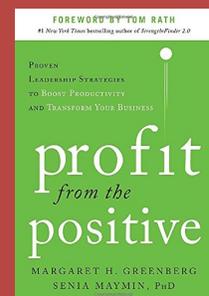
- Be on the forefront of bringing positive psychology to the workplace
- Reduce workshop design time and expand your offerings
- Be coached directly by the author(s)
- Earn continuing education credits
- Be a member of an international learning community of certified practitioners
- Gain access to business and marketing resources to grow your business
- Learn from anywhere in the world
- MAPP grads and ICF members receive a 50% discount on registration. Please email Margaret (margaret@thegreenberggroup.org) for the promo code.

To learn more, please don't hesitate to contact us and/or certified practitioner Joanna Thompson (MAPP 2007).

Best,

Margaret H. Greenberg, PCC and Senia Maymin, Ph.D.

Margaret and Senia met at MAPP 1 and are the co-authors of the bestseller *Profit from the Positive* (McGraw-Hill) which was recently rated among the 60 Great Business & Leadership Books, All Written by Women, by Inc. Magazine



## Now That You Have Your MAPP Degree . . . Learning to Dance

By Sean Doyle

For my wife's family, life is filled with dance. Every New Year's and Christmas, each *cumpleaños* and *quinceanera*, everyone would laugh and yell, cry and dance. And in the culture of her family, when the music is playing, it is duty of the man to ensure that no woman was ever sitting. Everyone should always be included in the celebration, personally and corporeally.

So at each party and family affair, I would approach every *mama* and *abuelita*, every *tia* and young *prima*, and invite them to salsa or cumbia. When my wife and I would weave and dip at weddings on my side of the family, all my cousins, WASPy and puritan, would whisper "Oh, Sean and Jenny are such good dancers." But here, every *gran dama de Colombia* would politely smile and say, "Dios mio, how cute. The gringo is trying to dance."

Recently, one of Jenny's 20-something cousins was sitting alone and I approached with palm outstretched. This young woman, nubile and lithe, could maneuver the dance floor in ways that would be illegal or impossible for an Irish-Catholic boy like me; bred in the suburbs and grown soft by middle-age.

And yet she took my hand and stayed with me, step-by-step. As Alma Socorro gently moved me around the room, conducting my every position and turn, she had the patience, awareness and grace to let me believe I was leading. And occasionally, in just the right amounts, she added a flourish to our dance. A flourish that gave reason to believe in the beautiful things.

So much of life is like that. After years of study and strain, we learn our trade or craft or art. Filled with this new-found knowledge and passion, we want to rush upon the world. We want to give of ourselves and offer everything we have to share. Meanwhile our poor little partner stands there, palm outstretched and wobbling on unsteady knees, and is easily overwhelmed.

Be patient. Remain attentive and aware, and always active. When we have something special that we want to give back so badly it hurts, we must do so with grace. We must have the presence to meet the others where they are. To come to them gently and stay with them step-by-step, as if teaching them to dance. We must learn how to guide, and follow their lead, simultaneously. Instilling confidence. Inviting play.

Like Nietzsche before me, I too consider the day wasted, in which there is no dancing.

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**John Sean Doyle** is a poet, storyteller and writer of practical things. A long-time lawyer and psychology professor, Sean works with individuals and groups on integrating the poetic with the pragmatic, and discovering a deeper love for life. For more articles on the poetry and science of living, see [www.JohnSeanDoyle.com](http://www.JohnSeanDoyle.com)

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