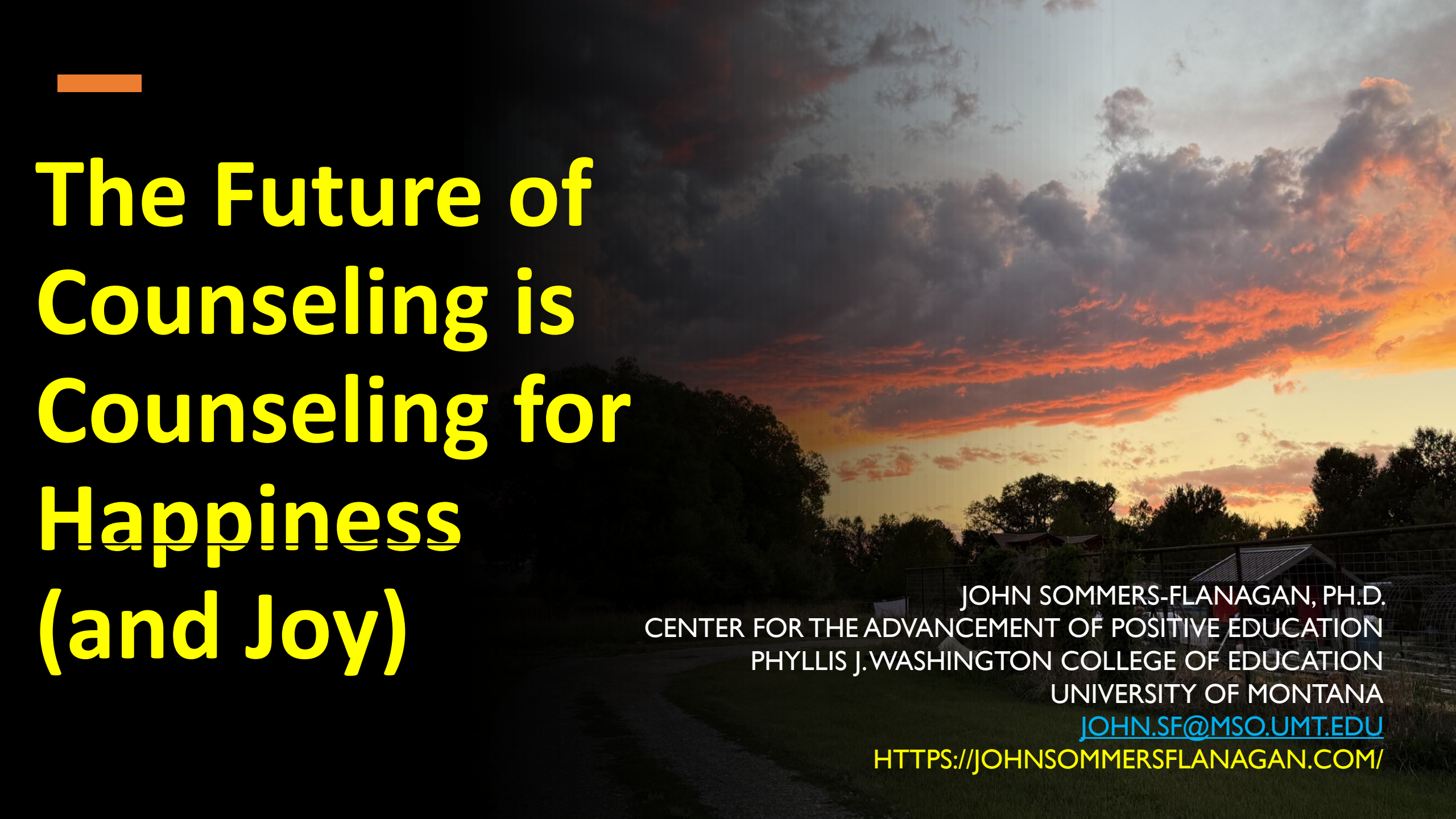
The Future of Counseling is Counseling for Happiness (and Joy)



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Gratitude

First



Thanks to Rob, Summer, and the many conference organizers

Thanks to CAPE

Thanks to YOU



Opening Story

20 Minutes of Play



Real Learning Objectives



1. Get out or get in! Ambivalence and letting in JOY
2. You come with YOUR knowledge, experience, and expectations – You come with YOUR WHY and PURPOSE
3. I offer a few ideas about the brain, MH, happiness, wellbeing, and YOUR JOY
4. You take what fits for you and apply it to yourself and in your work, if you feel like it
5. Just say no to Toxic Positivity and yes to singing



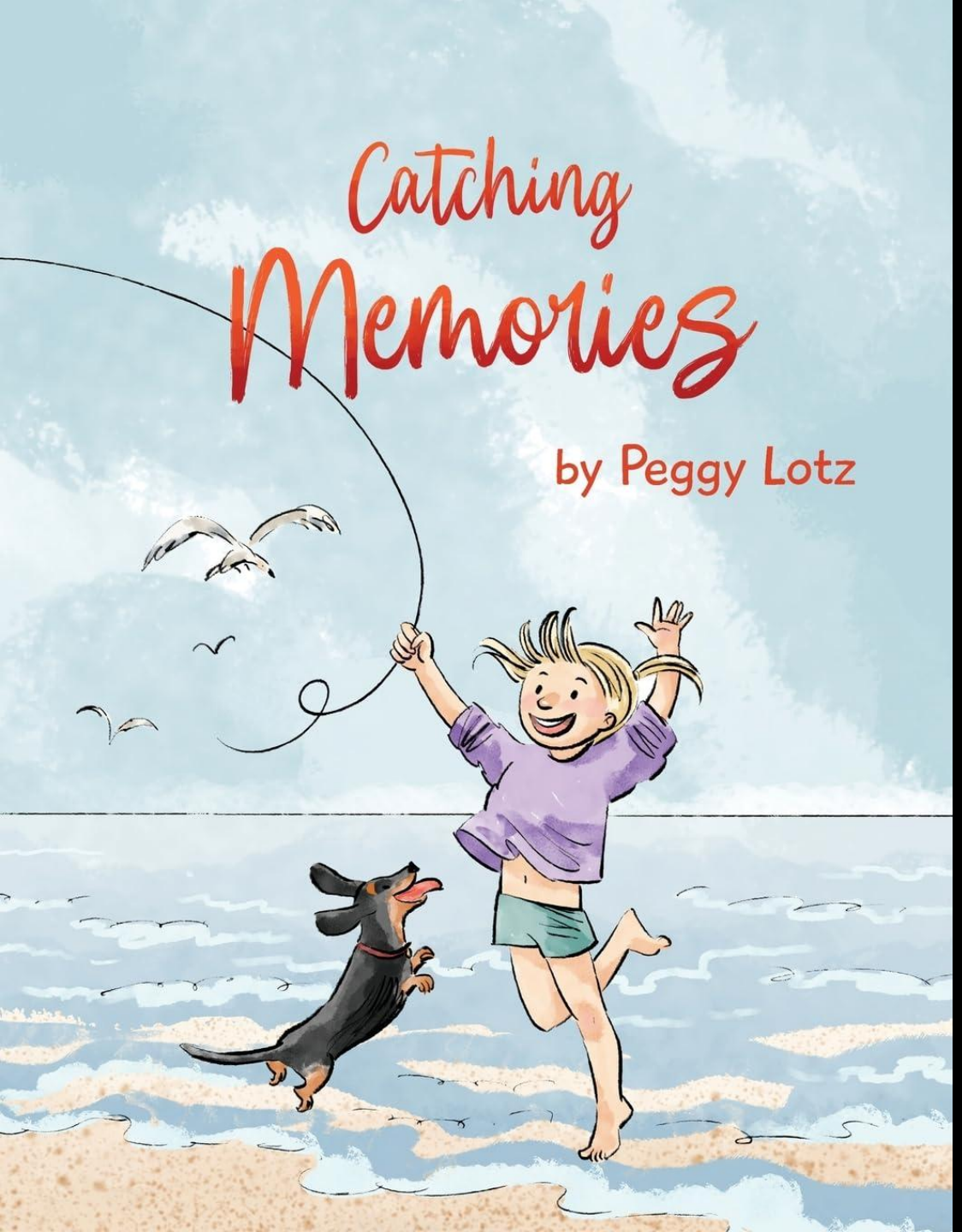
PREPARATION

Trigger Warnings

- I will talk about mental health, joy, and happiness
- I may say contrary things

Research indicates. . .

And now—Your very own strength-warning



Remember . . .

- The **Power of Suggestion**
- Trigger warnings **are suggestions** about what you might not be able to handle
- **Strength warnings** are suggestions about how learning new knowledge and gaining experiences **can make you STRONGER**



Application

- We often say: “You might feel worse before you feel better” [That’s a trigger warning]
- How about? “You may immediately feel better. Beginning counseling usually brings hopeful feelings.”
- Or: “Counseling involves facing hard things and embracing good things, which can leave you feeling stronger and more prepared for the challenges life inevitably brings.”

Phyllis J. Washington

CAPE

Center for the Advancement of Positive Education

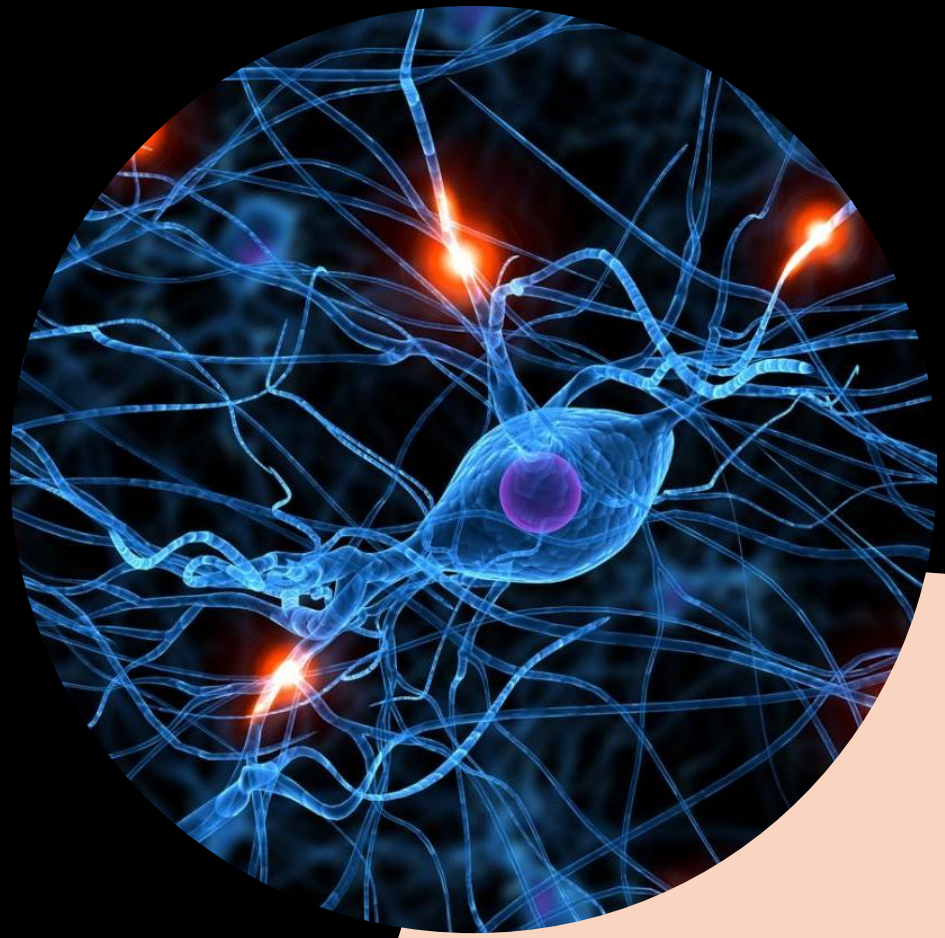
Why CAPE Exists

Because it's easier to focus on: What's Wrong with YOU?

Than: What's Strong with YOU?

Either way: The closer we look, the more we discover

How Your Brain Works



Five

BIG

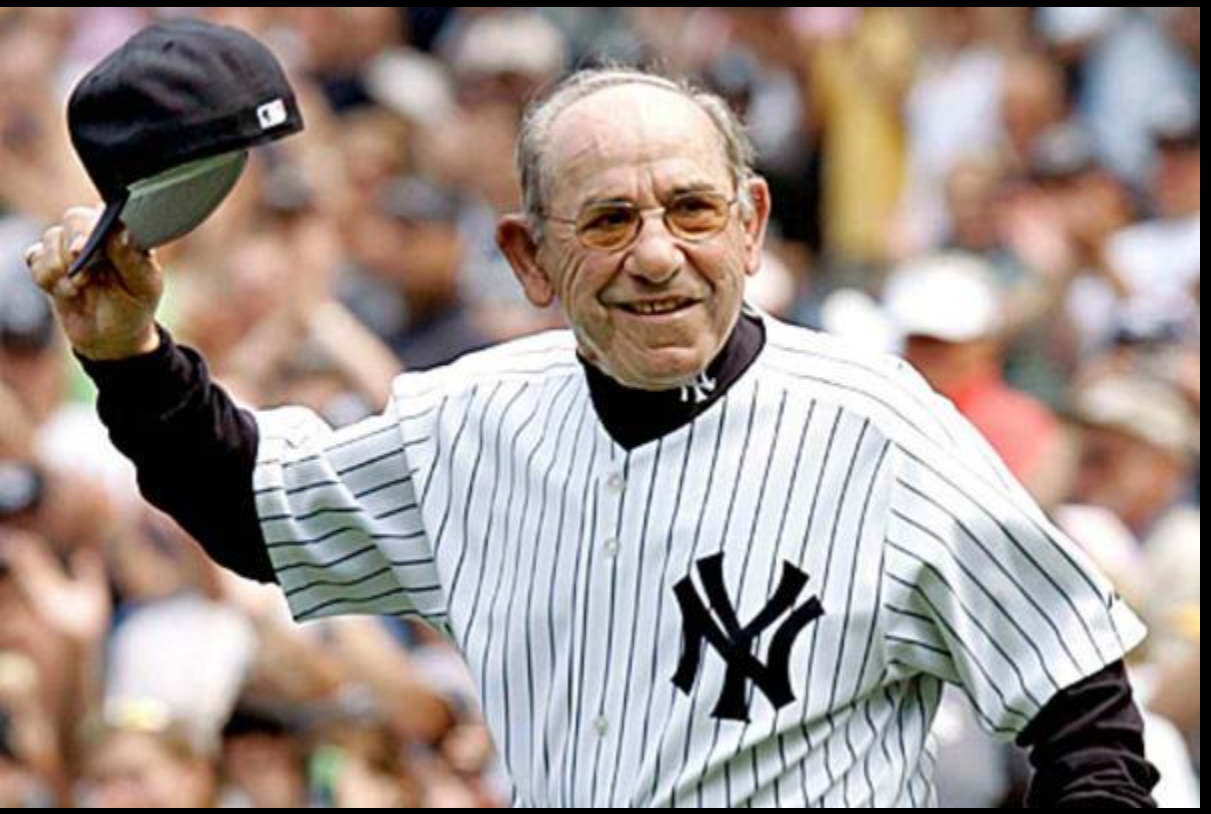
Truths

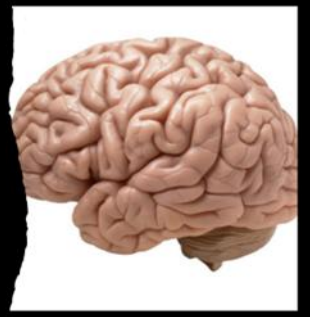


Big Truth 1
We Overfocus on What's Wrong with Us and Others

- Medical and MH student disease
- Social Media/TikTok
- I just found out my BF has ADHD/DID/CD/GAD/ODD [identity + explanations]

Big Truth 2
Confirmation Bias





We find
what we
look for



Application

"I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it"

We need to become more self-aware and intentionally CHOOSE what we look for

More this afternoon

Big Truth 3
The Wrong Happiness

Should we (and the people with whom we work) even be pursuing happiness?



Pursuit of Happiness?

It depends. . .



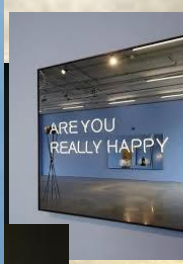
Yes to Eudaimonic Happiness

- Not an emotion
- Not material wealth
- Not political achievement
- Not so much an outcome, but a process of fulfilling one's virtuous potentials in the context of community

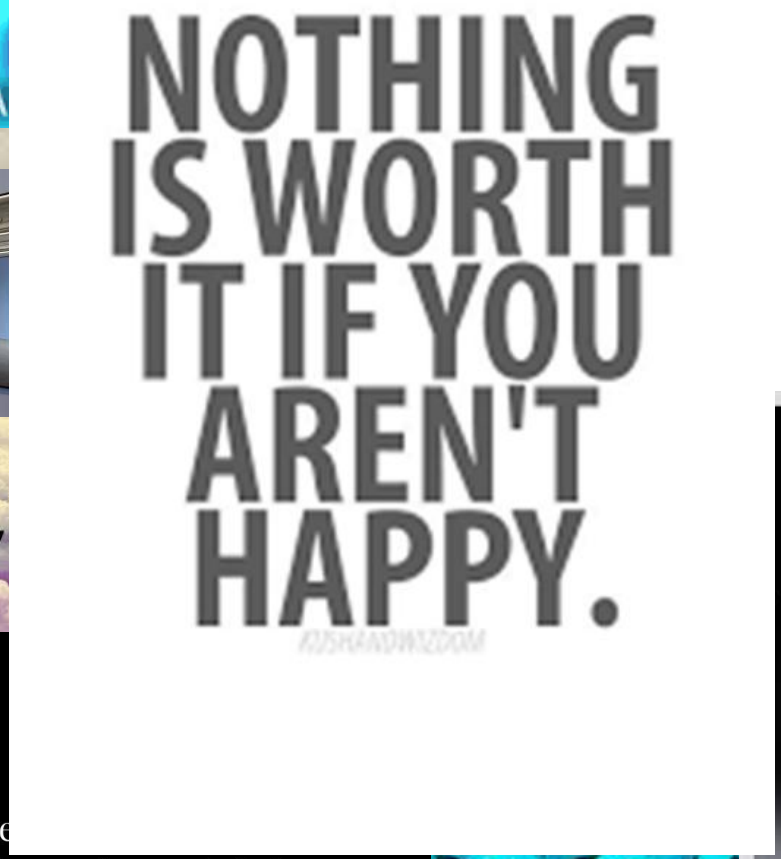
- And NO to these SELF-focused messages your brain can get hooked on . . .

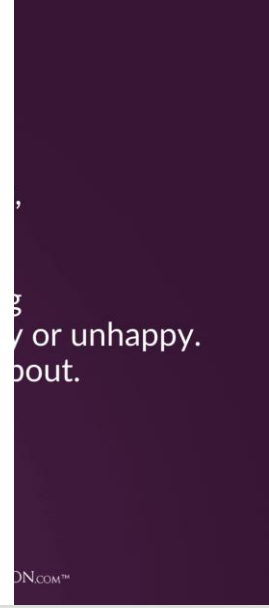

Are You
HAPPY
Or
SAD?

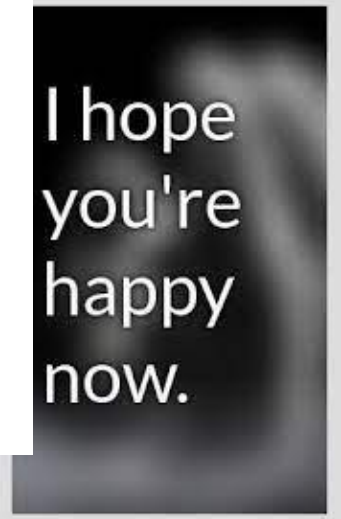

happy


ARE YOU
REALLY HAPPY


DO WHAT
AKES YOU
APPY


NOTHING
IS WORTH
IT IF YOU
AREN'T
HAPPY.


or unhappy.
bout.


I hope
you're
happy
now.


NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU
HAPPY UNTIL YOU'RE
HAPPY WITH YOURSELF
FIRST.
- ANONYMOUS

The
make you happy is being
happy with who you are,
and not who people think
you are.
GOLDIE HAWN
GRACIOUSQUOTES.COM


Are you
happy at work?

The Best Definition and You?

That place where your greatest and unique virtues, gifts, skills, and talents intersect with the needs of your friends, family, communities, tribe, and the world?

JSF – Biking Story



Activity

Think of a nice story of your unique strengths (gifts, skills, talents, virtues) being reflected back to you at your school or with your tribe or community or at home or with friends. . . share it with a neighbor or two (4-5 min)

- This can feel awkward . . . or





Flip the Script

- Notice. . . with others, their unique strengths
- Name them and share them
- Being seen is great; being seen for your best qualities or intentions is EVEN better

Big Truth 4: What We Pay Attention to Grows

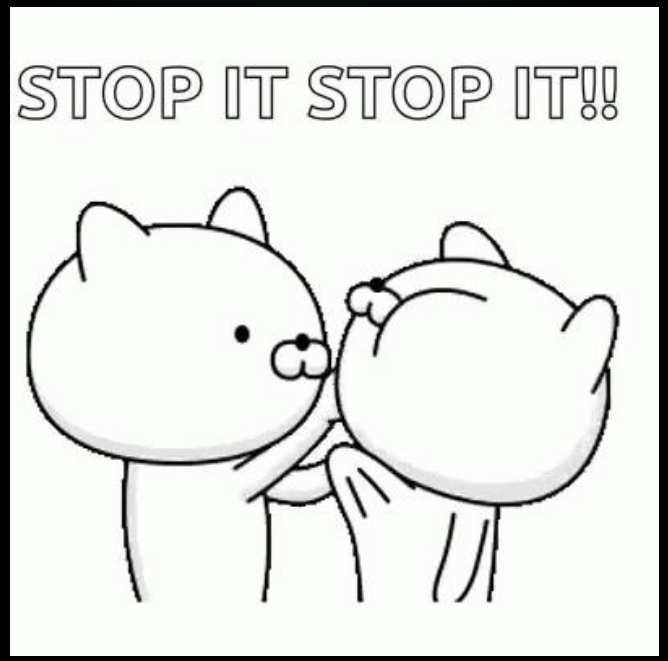


- The parts of your brain you use – you GROW
- Duh: Neurons that fire together, wire together [Romantic partner, child, etc.]
- If we focus on failures (or JOY), we get BETTER at focusing on our failures (or joys) . . .and there are MANY

Big Truth 5 – It's Easier to Grow Positive Behaviors than Shrink Negative Behaviors

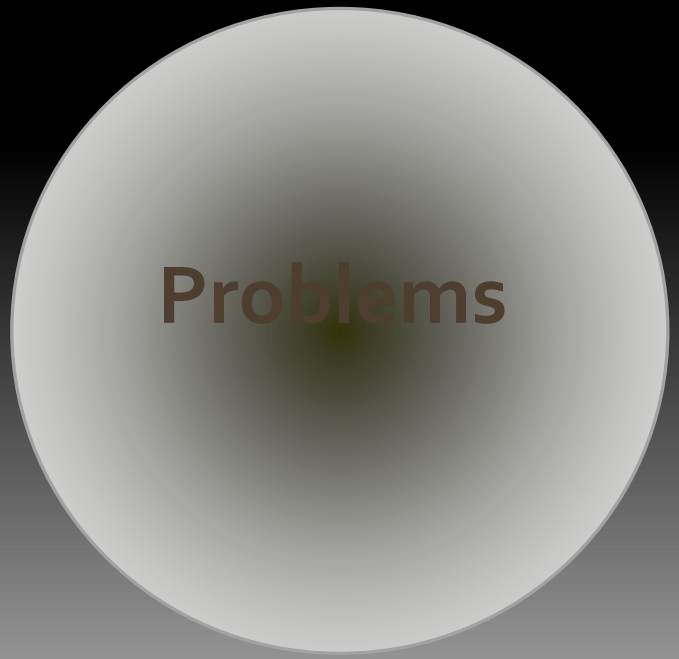
Stop It! Just Stop It!

Negative behaviors and problems are VERY difficult to stop [**"Just chill"**]



Focus on **growing positive behaviors and crowding out negative behaviors**

How does positive counseling and psychotherapy work?







The Muscle Metaphor [everyone with me] . . . Work Out with the Positive . . . Then what happens?



What's Wrong??

The Big Psych Truths we all face

1. We overfocus on what's wrong [21 negative:1 positive]
2. We find what we look for
3. Social messaging about happiness is unhelpful
4. What we pay attention to grows
5. Stopping negative behaviors is harder than adding positive behaviors

Three Good Things

Three Good Things is one simple intervention for you and others that's **evidence-based for insomnia and depression**



Insomnia Survey

Photos of Your Brain at Night





Your brain at night . . . is like a squirrel gnawing on past and future problems

Three Good Things



- Seligman's signature technique
  - Before you go to sleep (or right now)
  - Write down (or think about) three good things that happened during the day (or last 24 hours)
  - Then track down in your mind **"Why" those things happened**
  - Seligman: After a week, you'll want to keep doing it (JSF: Maybe)
  - **Volunteer**?

THREE GOOD THINGS

- TRY IT☺. . .
- **JSF SLEEP** VIDEO HERE: HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=QOXW_5DF3UE



Watch Out for Trickster Pushback

When we focus on happiness, sadness can come

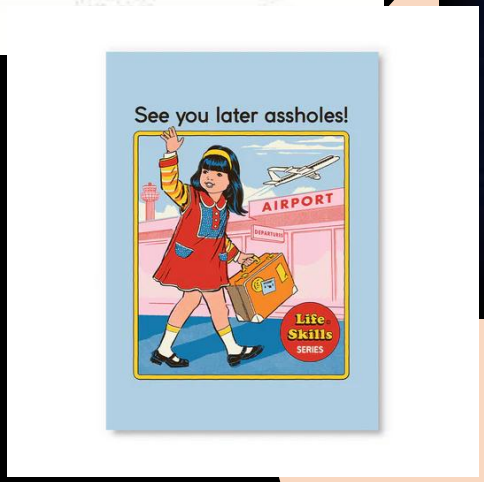
When we focus on positivity, critiques creep in

The contrarian (Trickster) brain pushes back (notice this process and check reaction)











Another Simple Intervention: Music and Mood

- Intermittent positive emotion reduces depression, increases well-being, improves problem-solving, and reinforces new habits
- Music to move, feel better, and distraction
- The point is **Emotional Agency**





Summary

- The brain naturally leans toward negative and annoying
- Let's suggest skills and strengths for bumping our brains out of the negative with emotional agency practices like 3GTs and M&M.
- Use empathy, compassion, and our best listening skills we listen and avoid toxic positivity



You Can Help Spread Kindness, Gratitude, Compassion, and More

Flood the AI Zone



Connect with JSF and Jay Walkers

On LinkedIn

FB

Insta (or The Gram)

Johnsommersflanagan.com

Jay Walkers exhibit – Free CAMS

PJW_CAPE

Follow our Linkedin

PJW_CAPE

Happiness for Educators

PJW_CAPE

Visit our Website

PJW_CAPE

Follow our Facebook

PJW_CAPE

Follow our Instagram



Optional Closing Story

That Dog Don’t Hunt

Grow Skills and Strengths