Character strength and virtues, ways of life, and life satisfaction

Original title / Originaltitel
Charakterstärken und Tugenden, Lebensstil und Lebenszufriedenheit

Summary / Zusammenfassung
According to Seligman (2002) there are three paths to happiness: the life of pleasure, the life of engagement and the life of meaning. The "pleasurable life" is about accumulating as many kicks as one can-and learning how to savor and amplify them. Examples are activities like shopping, eating, playing computer games, or taking drugs. The pleasant life is what people think of when considering whether they are happy from moment to moment. The life of engagement is about understanding and using one's core strengths/virtues in work and love and play. Using one's signature character strengths to the point of total absorption brings about flow (a concept pioneered by Mike Csikszentmihalyi). The good life comes through deep engagement in work, family life or other activities; i.e., any activity that one finds challenging and rewarding. Lastly, the "meaningful life" is when a person uses his/her strengths for the purpose of something larger than him/herself. This aspect of Seligman's model is directly related to Positive Institutions-those organizations that promote positive character development and/or meaning. Activities involved in the meaningful life may relate to volunteering at a soup kitchen, or helping at the school fair. Peterson and Seligman (in press) developed the “Ways of Life”-questionnaire, a 18 item measure of the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life. It is expected that having more pleasures does not increase life satisfaction. However, having a life of high absorption is expected to correlate to life satisfaction measures, and so should choosing to live a life of faith, purpose, and meaning. The project will first work on the German adaptation of the “ways of life”-instrument and then look at the interrelation among character strength (VIA-IS), the good life (German version of the ways of life), and life satisfaction in younger and older individuals.

Publications / Publikationen


Selected presentation:

Keywords / Suchbegriffe
character strength, virtues, the good life, life satisfaction, VIA-IS,

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Other Links to external Webpages / Andere Links zu externen Webseiten
http://www.charakterstaerken.org/

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