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Positive Thinking:
Toward a Conceptual Model
and
Organizational Implications

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MGT 495
Lubin Leaders and Scholarship Program
Senior Project in Management
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Chapter 1: Introduction

There have been many people and articles in pop culture stating that the extremely successful people, whether it be in the field of career, family, or health, are very positive and optimistic individuals (e.g. David J. Schwartz The Magic of Thinking Big, Thomas J. Stanley The Millionaire Mind, Dennis Prager Happiness is a Serious Problem, Norman Vincent Peale The Power of Positive Thinking)[1]. The terminology positive thinking, positive attitude, and optimism are used interchangeably quite often to describe successful people, when in fact positive thinking and optimism are not directly related, contrary to popular notion.

Whether it be business, family, or health, the most fulfilled and successful individuals in those categories practice positive thinking. Since the concept of positive thinking has not been clearly defined, positive thinking usually is bypassed or used incorrectly and is often simply referred to by the concept of optimism. Successful people cannot simply be optimistic, which is described more in depth later in the thesis. Because many individuals do not know what comprises positive thinking, it is often referred to as optimism, usually totally leaving out very important aspects of positive thinking.

"There is probably no more optimistic group of executives on the planet than the CEOs of the Inc. 500," states an article an article, in Inc, titled "The Incredible Upbeatness of Being." The article goes on to state, "the Inc. 500 CEOs are annoyingly upbeat. Their greatest concern is how to find good people to meet expansion needs, and how to keep things fun. But these CEOs are just doing what they love, oozing delights from every pore (Greco 1997)."

An article titled "The Basic Recipe for a Leader," in Modern Healthcare, states "people with a positive outlook on life can accomplish just about anything. They don't let doom-and-gloomers take their dreams away; they devise a plan and then persuade others to join them in accomplishing their goals (Laurer 2002)."

[1] Prager, Dennis. Happiness is a Serious Problem. New York: Regan Books, 1998. Pp 122-126. Stanley, Thomas J. The Millionaire Mind. Andrews McMeel Publishing: Kansas City, 2001. Pp 164-166. Schwartz, David J. The Magic of Thinking Big. Fireside: New York, 1959. Peale, Norman Vincent. The Power of Positive Thinking. New York: Fireside, 1952.

High Voltage, the "Queen of Energy," a world famous personal trainer and nutritionist quotes on her website, "bring positive thoughts into your life. Energy blocks can have their roots in low self-esteem, this happens to even the most high achieving and creative people from time to time." Some of High Voltage's clientele include Rue McClanahan, Katie Couric, Downtown Julie Brown, Kelsey Grammer, and RuPaul (Voltage 2004).

Even in the three articles quoted, the contextual implementations of the positive thinking idea are different. It is quite obvious that positive thinking is popular in pop culture, but unless this seemingly important topic, positive thinking, is grounded in scholarly proven research and literature, this concept is just hearsay. Originally, the organizational aim of this thesis was to prove how positive thinking affects success, but after much research I discovered that there, in fact, is no strong scholarly definition or theory for positive thinking.

In much of the research I found, optimism and positive thinking are highly correlated. They seem to go together, as one is defined by using the other in its definition, and they are used interchangeably in common terminology, but in theory they are not the same.

I have come to the conclusion that the concept and theory of positive thinking is widely unknown in America and that most American's do not know the logistics of how to think positively because research on the topic is extremely sparse. I had a difficult time defining positive thinking and was unable to find a widely accepted definition. The definitions of positive thinking and positive attitude are extremely vague in dictionaries. In the academic and scholarly dictionaries and journals there are a few recurring words and themes, though, which include character acceptance, self-approval, certainty, assurance, hope, and goal driven.

Positive thinking is "the practice or result of concentrating one's mind affirmatively on what is constructive and good, thereby eliminating from it negative or destructive thoughts and emotions (Simpson & Weiner 1989, Vol.12, Pp 166-169)." This is one of the best definitions I found, but the word 'good' is extremely vague. What comprises the word 'good?'

Through the eight pages in the dictionary defining the word 'good,' some fitting definitions included, "implying the existence in a high, or at least satisfactory, degree or characteristic qualities which are either admirable in themselves or useful for some purpose; Such as should be desired or approved, right, satisfactory; Sound, unimpaired. Of state of mind, courage, spirits: Not depressed or rejected; To feel oneself to be in good spirits or health; With reference to moral character, disposition, or conduct. Morally excellent or commendable. Of persons, with reference to their general character: virtuous; Kind, benevolent; gentle, gracious; friendly, favorable (Simpson & Weiner 1989, Vol. 6, Pp 668-675);" and the definitions go on and on and on.

Chapter 1A: History

In my research, I came across a few related topics to positive thinking, which include the history of positive psychology and optimism. After World War II, the American Psychology Association refocused its attention from "negative" psychology to finding the best dimensions of human nature, or "positive" psychology. Before the war, a major focus in psychology was on dysfunction and fixing what was wrong with people, what is now known as "negative" psychology. On the other hand, "positive" psychology focuses on "the enhancement and productivity in normal people's lives and the nurture of exceptional human potential (Piotrowski 2003)."

Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph. D. is widely known as the psychologist to bring widespread awareness to positive psychology. In 1998 Seligman was the president of the American Psychology Association and thus began the spread of positive psychology. He is currently a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, is a best-selling author, and focuses his attention on learned helplessness, depression, optimism, and pessimism as well as positive psychology.

Some of the research and emphasis in this field of study includes optimal experiences and the related concept of Flow, positive personal and characteristic traits, good mental and physical health, the nurture of excellence, and positive institutions. Positive Psychology is a form of social psychology that studies human experiences and strengths that make life most worth living (Piotrowski 2003).

"Positive psychology is thus an attempt to urge psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capabilities. Such an endeavor is surprisingly difficult within psychology's reductionist epistemological traditions, which train one to view positivity with suspicion, as a product of wishful thinking, denial, or hucksterism (Sheldon & King 2001)." I will take that statement one step further and say that a large portion of the public thinks that way as well.

Positive psychology is a realistic and useful form of psychology, and is not just an oxymoron. There is a hazy line separating factual knowledge and possible interpretations, which allows for positive or optimistic construals to be made that are potentially as correct and accurate as any other analysis. Positive contruals are healthier and lead to more success and happiness in life (Schneider 2001).

Mihalyi Csikzentmihalyi, a predominant positive psychologist, defines positive as 'enthusiastic, powerful, and confident.' He describes negative as 'lonely, doubtful, and empty' (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003). In positive psychology, a very important topic that is studied quite often is optimism, which focuses on the positive, not the negative.

Optimism, which is a focal point in positive psychology, is widely defined as a tendency to expect the best possible outcome, to dwell on the most hopeful aspects of a situation, a positive attitude that everything happens for the best, or that wishes will ultimately be fulfilled (Soukanov 1992, p 1271; Corsini 1999, p 671).

What is the difference between optimism, 'giving meaning to life,' and positive psychology, 'making life most worth living?' Magill's Encyclopedia of Social Science Psychology describes optimistic thinking in the positive psychology sections extremely well and is as follows:

> "Contrary to popular notions, optimism has very little to do with "positive thinking" or repeated positive-self phrases. Optimism has much more to do with explanatory style or habitual ways of thinking about why good and bad things happen. Optimistic people are more likely to explain negative experiences in terms of external, temporary, specific causes ("I failed the test because I just did not have time to study this week—next week it will be different"). Positive

> experiences are more likely to be understood in terms of internal, stable, global causes ("I received a high score on the exam because I'm smart") (Piotrowski 2003, p 1160)."

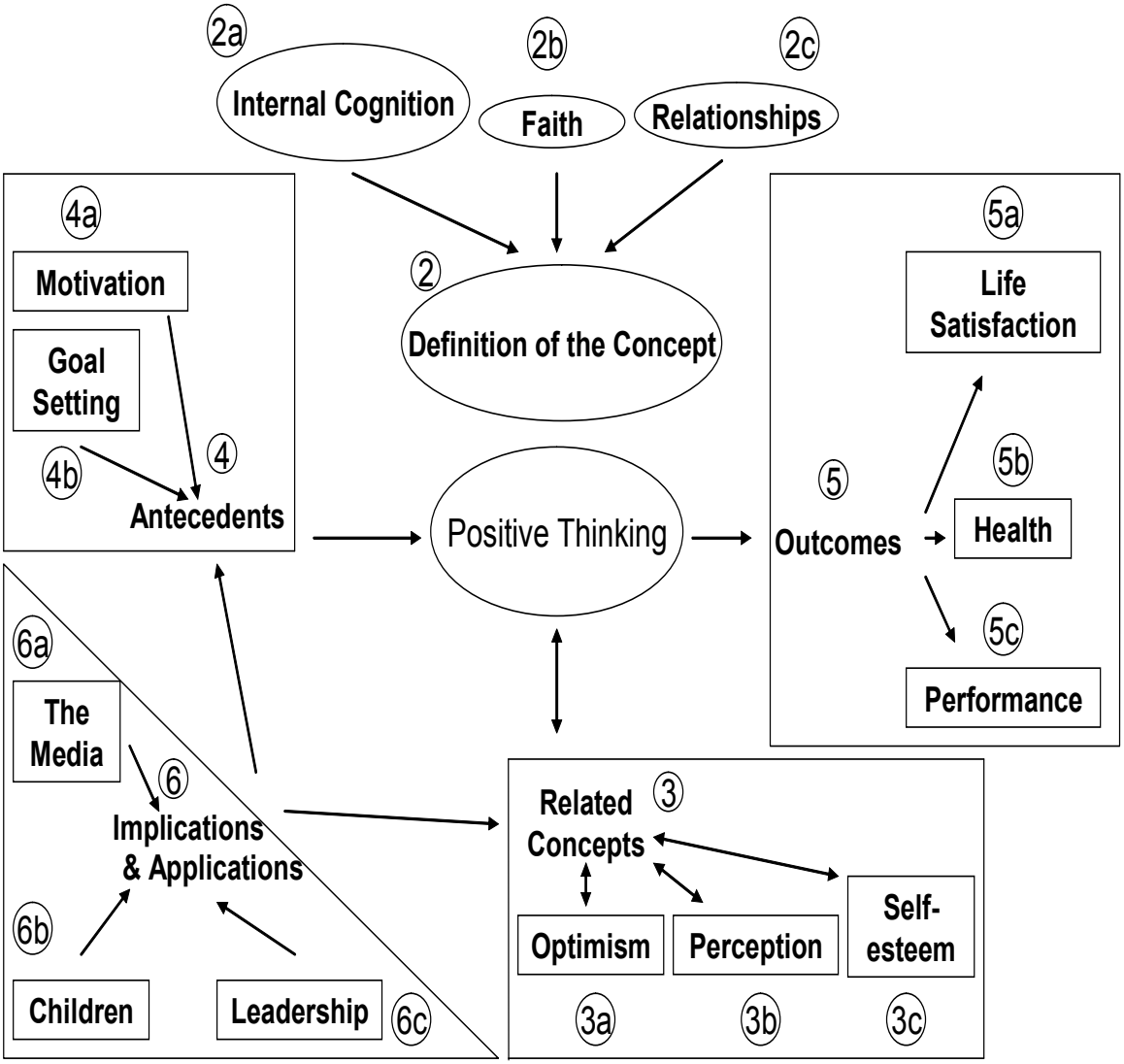
The importance of positive thinking, even though it is a popular topic in pop culture, is yet to be proven. It has also been established that there is an ill definition, based in scholarly work, of the concept of positive thinking. Between the unknown importance and the ill definition of positive thinking, there lies a gap that I will attempt to address with this thesis.

The layout of the model of positive thinking is shown in figure 1, the Positive Thinking Model (PTM). The PTM is broken down into chapters, which are different concepts relating to positive thinking. The concepts that flow vertically in the model are aspects or related concepts of positive thinking. The aspects that flow horizontally in the model are the antecedents and outcomes of positive thinking. The sixth aspect of the model, located in the lower left corner of the model, is the aspect that actually activates the model. The PTM, as a whole, has a circular flow to it.

Research Questions:

- **Chapter 2: What is the definition of positive thinking and what are its elements?**
- **Chapter 3: How is positive thinking related to scholarly literature on related concepts?**
- **Chapter 4: What causes positive thinking?**
- **Chapter 5: What are the outcomes of positive thinking?**

Figure 1: Positive Thinking Model (PTM)



Chapter 2: Definition of the Concept

I am breaking down positive thinking into three intertwined subdivisions: internal cognition, faith, and influential personal relationships.

Chapter 2A: Component 1: Internal Cognition

The internal cognitive thought process of positive thinking is purpose based. One's purpose, or greater reason for living, is what drives a person's internal cognition, or inner thought process. Purpose is defined as "something one intends to get or do; intention; aim; the object for which something exists or is done; determination (Agnes 1999)."

A burning desire, or internal fire, must be ignited from within in order for a person to be inspired, which in turn leads a person to act on a thought. The driven internal thought process leads to external action. Having a purpose which rules you and drives your thought process daily, your internal cognition, keeps you focused on a goal. With a goal comes purpose, which is gone into greater depth later in chapter 4B on goal setting.

A Purpose In Life (P.I.L.) test was invented by J. C. Crumbaugh "that attempts to measure the degree to which an adult has life goals (Corsini 1999)." Crumbaugh's test is based on the concept of "will to meaning," induced by Viktor Frankl. Will to Meaning (W.T.M.) denotes the need to find a suitable purpose and meaning in one's life. The W.T.M is the basis and fundamental motivation of logotherapy, developed by Frankl as a technique for addressing problems related to the contemporary existence of meaninglessness (Corsini 1999; Goldenson 1984).

Positive thinkers dwell on the positive, they dwell on their purpose, they dwell on the things in their external and internal environment that feed their purpose rather than on the negative, which feeds defeat of their purpose. There must be harmony with one's internal and external states, so purpose can be transformed into action.

(H1A: Positive thinking is internally driven by one's purpose.)

Chapter 2B: Component 2: Faith

Plain and simply, positive thinking is based in a spiritual foundation. Positive thinkers have faith in the way the world works, and also have faith that everything in life happens for a reason. Positive thinkers know they have a purpose and meaning on Earth, and they were put on Earth for a purpose. Positive thinkers know there is opportunity in every situation because there is purpose for every situation, which will help them get closer to their larger purpose in life.

Faith, religious faith, and spirituality are very closely defined and I will be using all of those terms in this thesis. Faith is defined as having confidence, trust, and a belief in a phenomenon without empirical evidence (Corsini 1999; Simposon & Weiner 1989). In that context, a positive thinker has trust in nature, the ticking of the world, or one's God, and they have been given a purpose that will help them achieve that purpose throughout life, without actually physically seeing evidence.

Spirituality is "the subjective experience of something sacred, numinous, or greater than self (Corsini 1999)." The main aspect of internal cognition in positive thinking is having a purpose that is larger than oneself, which ties into spirituality.

Often time positive thinking is based in religion (e.g. Christianity) but it does not have to be based in religion. Religion is a vehicle often used to increase faith and spirituality. "Spirituality is moral and emotional in nature and involves an understanding and appreciation of one's position in the universe, one's soul, and the role of a God. Organized religions provide rituals, routines, and ceremonies that can provide a vehicle for achieving spirituality (Rothberg 1993)." Worldly religious views often encourage a more optimistic reflection of life events by supplementing answers to many of life's deepest questions. People often derive a sense of purpose and meaning from their faith.

"Spirituality leads to a self-understanding of objectives and a translation of overarching purpose that guides action…spirituality provides faith, courage and hope that facilitate wise decision making and actions (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000)." Spirituality and faith are connected to internal cognition through purpose. Motivation to focus beyond the self is also derived from faith. Spirituality provides "a foundation of core beliefs and a better, holistic understanding of one's purpose in life (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000)."

The fact alone that positive thinkers have faith or are religious is not enough. It is faith that gives one reassurance that there are positive forces in the world, that one has a purpose on Earth and is not just a human philandering until their time on Earth is done. Faith also helps an individual to feel that the world, in fact, is helping them to achieve their purpose here on Earth.

I will highlight aspects of Christianity, a western religion, and Hinduism and Sikhism, two eastern religion, to show how they add to the thought process of positive thinking. It is possible that other religions incorporate aspects of positive thinking, but more research would need to be involved. For the purposes of this thesis, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism are the religions being examined.

Christianity

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)." This passage from the New International Version of the Bible speaks about goals and purpose. With goals come purpose, and purpose leads to inspiration, which leads to expression. If purpose does not lead to expression, it will lead to depression, said Pastor Jim Cymbala (Cymbala 2005) of the world renowned Brooklyn Tabernacle. Many teachings from the Bible incorporate messages on the topic of purpose, including the next passage written in the book 1 Corinthians.

"You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Archaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors in it (1 Corinthians 16:15-16)." You must have a purpose bigger than yourself, said Pastor Cymbala (2005). Many teachings from Jesus in the New Testament are about giving to and serving others, which humbles a person and gives one a bigger purpose to work for beyond oneself. Passages of having a bigger purpose in life are intertwined throughout the Bible, which is an underlying factor for internal cognition in positive thinking.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale is an internationally acclaimed bestseller author of many books, including The Power of Positive Thinking, and was also the pastor of the

Marble Collegiate Church in New York City from 1932-1984. The following passage by Dr. Peale outlines the relationships between faith, religion, and success:

> "There was a time when I acquiesced in the silly idea that there is no relationship between faith and prosperity; that when one talked about religion he should never relate it to achievement, that it dealt only with ethics and morals or social values. But now I realize that such a viewpoint limits the power of God and the development of the individual. Religion teaches that there is a tremendous power in the universe and that this power can dwell in personality. It is a power that can blast out all defeat and lift a person above all difficult situations (Peale 1952, p 173)."

Dr. Peale's work is highlighted in the book, The Millionaire Mind, which depicts the thought process of some of the country's most financially successful people. A section in the book, entitled "Fear Reduction 101: Positive Thinking," highlights Dr. Peale's writings and teachings, which are based in Christianity and principles from the Bible. "Yet many others [millionaires], perhaps unknowingly, have adopted at least some of Dr. Peale's principles, whether they have strong religious beliefs or not (Stanley 2001)." Christianity has been shown to be an important part of a balanced, successful, fulfilled, and positive life.

Dr. Peale's work is part of pop culture and for the most part cannot be scholarly proven because it is based on religion and teachings from the Bible. Because his teachings are widely accepted by the mass public, and actually, since the Oxford Dictionary references Dr. Peale's work in the definitions of 'positive' and 'positive thinking,' Dr. Peale's work is included in this thesis. Dr. Peale described positive thinking as having a deep belief in oneself and having confidence that one can overcome all difficulties (Peale 1952, p 106).

Christianity incorporates a base of positive thinking in its teachings. People who had the highest spiritual commitment (e.g., agreeing with "my religious faith is the most important influence in my life") were twice as likely to declare themselves "very happy," compared with people who had the lowest spiritual commitment (Myers 2000).

Hinduism

Hinduism is intertwined through almost every aspect of life for people who follow this religion, including everything from social class, to one's diet, to earning a living, to family, to politics. The religion of Hinduism is inseparable from other aspects of life (BBC World Services 2005).

"Behind Hindu practices is the belief that every soul is trapped in a cycle of birth and death and then rebirth. Every Hindu wants to escape from this cycle (BBC World Services 2005)." Hindus aim at living a life better than their previous life, which would incorporate motivation and goal setting, which are antecedents to positive thinking. Because religion is intertwined throughout many aspects of life, Hindus' internal cognition is constantly aimed at their purpose, which is greater than their human existence.

Some historians make links between Christianity and Hinduism. Hinduism was not founded by just one person, like Christianity, but many people make connections between the story of Jesus Christ, founder of Christianity, and Krishna, the second person of the Hindu Trinity (Robinson 2004). Because of some of the links of founders of the religions, some feel that certain parts of the original founding beliefs are alike (Robinson 2004).

Sikhism

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion, as is Christianity, where they believe in one God. Through this religion, the vital relationship with God is able to be met. "The goal of human life is to break the cycle of births and deaths and merge with God (Sikhism 1998)." Part of a person's existence in Sikhism is to merge their overlaying purpose in life, merging with God, which will constantly be in one's internal cognition, with a vital relationship with God. Some of the Sikhs' sacred text reads, ""True life is life in God, contemplation on the Name and the society of the saints (Guru Arjan Dev, Dhanasari)" Sikhism 1998)." Mediation and charitable giving helps to focus on God (Sikhism 1998), which also helps to keep their purpose, within positive thinking, at the forefront of their mind.

* * *

With believing in a religion often comes attending a religious sanctuary where people receive positive external influences. Findings show that weekly church and synagogue attendees' rate of volunteerism is doubled and charitable giving is quadrupled compared to that of non-attendees (Myers 2000, p 333). Religion helps people to find a purpose larger than just focusing on themselves.

Positive thinkers know they have a purpose and know that they must constantly surround themselves with positive, moral, encouraging, affirmative, constructive, optimistic, and upbeat aspects in their daily life, so their internal and external environment match and are in harmony with one another. Religion and religious sanctuaries often provide that for people. If one feeds one's faith, one's doubts will starve to death and one will be able to focus on one's purpose.

(H1B: Positive thinking is based in a faith that everything in life happens for a reason.)

(H1C: Positive thinking is aided by religious faith.)

Chapter 2C: Component 3: Relationships

Influential personal relationships can further be divided into three subdivisions, which consist of a relationship with oneself, one's God, and one's family. "Close, supportive, committed relationships also mark happy lives (Myers 2000, p 330)." The relationship with oneself, with one's God, and with one's family shows a person that one has other people, or beings, helping one through life. People are not holding the weight of the world on their shoulders, but in fact, always have other to guide and support them. Positive relationships with meaningful people and beings help to give meaning and purpose to life.

The first important relationship is with oneself, which is associated with internal cognition and purpose. It is also related to self-esteem, which is analyzed in chapter 3C. One must be at peace with oneself, inside and outside. How one feels on the inside must match what one sees on the outside, or there will be a constant battle in one's internal cognition. If there is something that is always on one's mind, then one's purpose cannot

be the main concept on one's mind. One's internal cognition must be free and at peace so it can freely think.

The second vital relationship is with one's God, which is associated with faith and often times religion. I am going to show the importance of one's God through a small parable. The following story is a Christian parable and is presupposing that there is only one God.

* * *

A very wise woman once saw that a young and directionless girl needed help. The wise woman went over to the young girl and asked her, "How many sides are there to a box?"

The girl said, "Excuse me?"

Once again, the wise woman said, "How many sides are there to a box?"

"Uh, four," the young girl said.

The wise woman responded by saying, "No Darling, that is a square. How many sides are there in a box?"

The young girl sat and thought for a moment and said, "There are six sides to a box. Yeah, six sides."

"Darling, just because we only get to see six sides of the box does not mean there aren't any more sides. Everyone lives inside their own box, their own world, and they are only allowed to see six sides. How many sides are there to a *box*?"

The young girl bent forward and felt as if she had been struck by lightning. She looked up to the old woman with tears in her eyes and said, "There is a God! Oh my gosh, there is a God." The young girl stopped as she choked on tears as she said, "There are twelve sides to a box!"

The very wise woman looked at the young girl with motherly love in her eyes and said, "That is right Darling, there are twelve sides to a box. We are only allowed to see six of them. God sees all twelve."

* * *

Many people believe that they do everything on their own. People without a relationship with God only look for answers to questions within themselves, but often times cannot find answers. People who rely only on themselves often times lack direction

and purpose; they lack Godly guidance. Without faith, there is no purpose. Everything in life happens for a reason and God put you on Earth for a reason, for a purpose. After all, we only see six sides to a box. God sees all twelve.

Christians are often tied together by religious groups. Faith communities, of which there exists about 350,000 in the United States, often offer supportive and close relationships (Myers 2000, p 333). These faith communities often are a form of family for people, which is the third important relationship.

The third aspect of important relationships is composed of family, or 'ohana.' Ohana, a word from the Hawaiian language, captures the essence of the English word, 'family,' perfectly. One's ohana can include those born with blood ties, accepted by marriage, adopted into the family, tied to the same land or clan, or deceased and spiritual ancestors. The direct translation for ohana is family or clan, which in modern times includes one's close base of friends. Ohana makes important relationships more significant than just saying they are family or friends, and I will reference the word ohana throughout this thesis. The reason the group 'friends' was not included in the essential relationships is because family does not just include those who are blood related. The word 'friend' in the English language often does not have much substance behind the meaning.

A very important aspect of most people's ohana is marriage. Research shows that nine out of ten people chose marriage as a major alternative to aloneness. Research also shows that 57% of people who have a "very happy" marriage declare their lives "very happy." Of the people surveyed, 40% of married adults, compared to 24% of never married adults, declare themselves "very happy" (Myers 2000, p 330-331). All people accepted in one's ohana are to help one find purpose and happiness in life.

(H1D: Positive thinking is aided by one's relationship with oneself, one's God, and one's ohana.)

Chapter 2D: Components Synergized: Positive Thinking

""One-third of all Americans wake up depressed every day," says Father John Powell in *Happiness Is an Inside Job*. Professionals estimate that only 10% to 15% of Americans think of themselves as truly happy (Myers 2000, p 323)." These statistics on

Americans are quite pathetic since an individual is in control of their happiness and emotional state, which is the base of positive thinking.

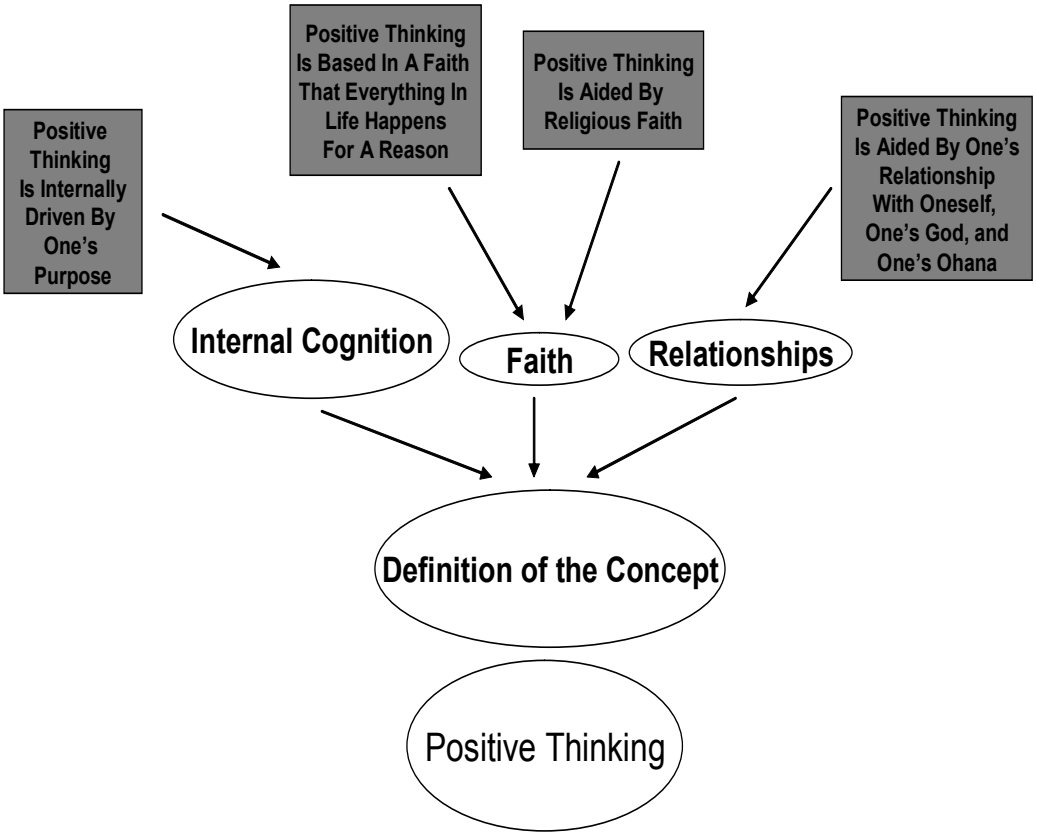
An individual has three options. One can chose to be positive, one can chose to be negative, or one can chose not to chose and allow the external environment to determine how one internally feels and externally acts. The same goes for being happy, grateful, thankful, satisfied, optimistic, etc. For example, before you open your eyes in the morning, you can chose to be happy or you can chose to be unhappy. Most people do not make a choice. They chose to open their eyes and open the bedroom curtains. If it is raining, the first assumption is made that the day is going to be bad. If the decision had been made to be happy before waking up and had then looked outside at the rain, it would not have had a negative affect because the decision had already been made that it was going to be a great day.

I am not excluding the fact that external circumstances do have an impact on an individual's internal environment, though. Many people take a new situation and automatically turn it into a negative situation, which affects one's internal state. For example, in Hawaii rain is a blessing. Isn't that interesting, a simple concept like rain can be reframed from a negative to a positive concept by just choosing to make it positive. External factors must feed one's chosen internal attitude, which will make one's internal cognition more positive. A more positive internal cognitive state will in turn aid in focusing one's attention to one's purpose.

In conclusion, I have proposed a firm definition of positive thinking and have also proposed the elements that make up positive thinking, which will be discussed in depth later in the thesis.

Positive Thinking: A thought process, based in a faith that everything in life happens for a reason; aided by a strong relation with oneself, one's God, and one's ohana (family or clan).

Figure 2: Positive Thinking Definition in the PTM



Chapter 3: Related Concepts to Positive Thinking

Three concepts related to positive thinking are vital ingredients in implementing positive thinking into the minds and bodies of individuals, and those three concepts are optimism, perception, and self-esteem. Chapter 3 is broken down to show some main aspects of each of the three related concepts. Because I have found no research correlating positive thinking, which I defined, to optimism, perception, and self-esteem, I made possible correlations between these three concepts and positive thinking.

As stated in the previous chapter, positive thinking is an internal process. The three related concepts in this chapter will help to show how positive thinking can be shown externally, and be implemented into many aspects of an individual's life. Through learning how optimism, perception, and self-esteem are interrelated with positive thinking, more people can learn to think positively.

Chapter 3A: Optimism

Positive thinking is the root of optimism. The reason the word 'optimistic' is used so frequently to describe positive people is because optimism is what is visibly being shown on the outside of the framework of positive thinking. Optimism is the external form of positive thinking. Because positive thinking is based on an internal thought process, it must have a way to be shown externally, and that is through optimism. There is no substance behind optimism if positive thinking is not present. Conceptually, one of the major differences among optimism, hope, goal setting, and positive affect, is that optimistic expectancies are formed through other forces outside the self, while the others are initiated and determined through the self (Seligman 2001), just as positive thinking is.

Optimists are often seen as going through life wearing "rosy colored glasses" or living in a "very happy place," which is somewhere else besides reality. Optimists who are based in a strong foundation of positive thinking are simply choosing to find the positive in life. "When most people say they are being "realistic" they delude themselves: they are simply being negative (Peale 1952, p 175)." As described before, optimism is widely defined as a tendency to expect the best possible outcomes, to dwell on the most hopeful aspects of a situation, a positive attitude that everything happens for the best, or that wishes will ultimately be fulfilled (Soukanov 1992, p 1271; Corsini 1999, p 671).

Positive thinkers know that bad things happen, but they have faith that everything will work out the way it is supposed to work. They know that they are still on the road to achieving their purpose, and that is why they still are able to have an optimistic attitude. "Optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 5, p 3516)." Optimists who are grounded in a base of positive thinking and faith are not being naïve by expecting good things to happen to them, because they have faith that God will guide them in the right direction. "If these [optimistic] feelings are persistent in the face of adversity, they may be defenses against anxiety and disappointed expectations (Goldenson 1984, p 515)."

In this chapter I will demonstrate how different aspects of optimism are related to positive thinking. The following subsections of optimism are the following: optimistic bias, optimistic explanatory style, optimism: behavior or personality, and positive affect.

Optimistic Bias

Some speculate that optimistic bias, unrealistic optimism, groundless optimism, or positivity bias (this concept has many names) exists among optimists and is health damaging. The optimistic bias trend of thinking involves the faulty belief that negative events are less likely to happen to optimists, or themselves, than other people. The optimistic bias states that optimists may not take important health and medical precautions and may not cooperate fully with medical treatment, which could be health damaging or even fatal (Peterson, et al 1998; Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 16, p 11267).

One reason why some people believe that an optimistic bias exists is because optimists have reported coping better with life threatening and fatal diseases, like HIV, AIDS, and cancer, than those who are not optimistic (Aspinwall & Brunhart 2000; Peterson 2000). Because optimists dealing with severe and fatal diseases are still able to remain optimistic makes some people speculate over a possible optimistic bias trend existing. Some researchers speculate that optimists may be in denial of their physical state, and fear that a false sense of security is given to optimists. In turn, a fear exists that certain steps of recovery are not given attention to by optimists because of the false sense of security (Aspinwall & Brunhart 2000).

Most research involved with surgery, chronic illness, and medical recovery time is self-reported, which are subject to personal biases, including a possible optimistic bias. It is possible to use precautions and controls when doing research to control statistics for influences on certain biases, but it is impossible to rule out possible optimistic biases when the research or study is self-reported (Aspinwall &Brunhart 2000).

Aspinwall & Brunhart (2000) conducted three studies using different measures, materials, and manipulations to study optimistic bias, all of which showed strong evidence that optimistic bias does, in fact, not exist. They found "no evidence that optimists maintain their positive beliefs by tuning out negative information," and found that optimistic beliefs are associated with greater processing of health-risk information. Actually, Aspinwall & Burnhart's findings show that optimists devote more attention to severe illnesses as self-relevant health risks increase. Optimists may pay more attention to symptoms, early detection, and management of illness than non-optimists.

An interesting point was made by Aspinwall & Brunhart (2000) with respect to wishful thinking (that one can cure oneself of disease by one's thoughts). They found that positive thoughts did not interfere with health-risk information. Interestingly, they referred to "positive thoughts" as positive thinking. Because of the advanced medical knowledge available, it is not wise to simply rely on "wishful thinking," but their research showed that wishful thinking and positive beliefs actually seemed to facilitate more attention to self-relevant health information.

Positive thinking decreases the possibility of an optimistic bias ever existing and aids in optimists' precautionary health efforts. Because positive thinkers know that they have a purpose in life and have an ohana that loves them, they are more likely to do what they have to do, health wise, to battle severe illnesses. The reliance of the power of God is also very important and helps give people strength to get through severe illnesses (Myers 2000).

Positive thinking increases optimism to a point, but also prevents one from being overly optimistic, as well. Imagine if you will, a bell curve, with optimism as the vertical axis and positive thinking on the horizontal axis. Both optimism and positive thinking will increase together until a certain point, when optimism will start to decrease as positive thinking continues to increase, which would be the downward slope of the bell

curve. The optimal part of the bell curve is where optimism and positive thinking are equally high, but optimism will not continue to increase as positive thinking increases, which would not allow an optimistic bias to occur.

(H2A: Positive thinking decreases groundless optimism, unrealistic optimism, and optimistic bias.)

Optimistic Explanatory Style

Optimistic explanatory style refers to habitual ways of explaining and understanding the causes and implications of events (Peterson & Seligman 1987). One's attributions are often positive when attempting to explain the cause of a negative event when one has an optimistic explanatory style (Worthington 2000). An optimistic explanatory style is healthier and leads one away from meaninglessness and towards purpose in one's life.

Two ways of measuring one's explanatory style are a self-report questionnaire called the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) and a content analysis procedure called the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanation (CAVE) technique. The ASQ has one rate six bad events and six good events on a seven point scale "according to its internality versus externality, stability versus instability, and globality versus specificity (Peterson & Seligman 1987)." The CAVE technique helps to determine causal explanations and is proven valid, reliable, and consistent and has been "used to measure explanatory style from psychotherapy transcripts, interviews, open-ended questionnaires, political speeches, sports stories, religious texts, and even song lyrics (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 7, pp 5162-5164)."

Optimism and an optimistic explanatory style directly affect one's ohana, which is a vital aspect of positive relationships in positive thinking. Research shows that optimism in marriage is important because an optimistic explanatory style leads to higher marital quality. "Specifically, spouses with more optimistic explanatory styles show higher rates of positive behavior and lower rates of negative behavior (Fincham 2000)." Research also shows that spousal explanatory style influences marital behavior, happiness in marriage, and marital satisfaction (Worthington 2000; Fincham 2000). The explanatory style shown

by a parent correlates to that which is shown by their children (Fincham 2000), as well. An optimistic explanatory style is vitally important in the relationships in one's ohana.

Much research shows that a pessimistic explanatory style is very unhealthy, cognitively and physically. Research indicates that smoking habits are more likely to occur among pessimists than optimists, which suggests that a probable link exists between explanatory style and poor health (Peterson 2000). Pessimism, self-blame, and pessimistic explanatory style bridge bad and uncontrollable experiences, depression, and learned helplessness (Peterson & Seligman 1987; Schulman 1999; Fincham 2000).

Learned helplessness "refers to inappropriately passive behavior (Peterson & Seligman 1987)." Peterson & Seligman (1987) conducted an experiment on dogs that were exposed to a certain amount of shocks that they could not prevent or avoid. When the same dogs were tested 24 hours later, the dogs passively tolerated the shocks, and that is where helplessness was first discovered. The dogs initially showed no shortfalls when they were exposed to the shocks, which show that one single event, if seen as not contingent to anything else, may produce helplessness. When one perceives an event as uncontrollable, one usually asks oneself, "Why did this occur?" The answer to that simple question affects one's response to that event by shaping future expectations (Peterson & Seligman 1987). This is where the components, faith and purpose, come into play for positive thinking. The "faith that everything in life happens for a reason" and constant drive towards one's purpose will help to not cause helplessness.

As stated, there exists a link between helplessness and pessimism. People with a pessimistic explanatory style often prefer a more dangerous lifestyle than that of optimists. The pessimists then paid the price of their choice of lifestyle in the form of accidental injuries, which is a sign of "escaping from the self." Males who have pessimistic explanatory styles may "escape" by "drinking and engaging in other blatantly dangerous activities," and females who have pessimistic explanatory styles may do so "by eating too much or not al all (Peterson 2000)." An amazing piece of research shows that pessimistic cognitive styles, where people constantly think about bad events, projects into many aspects of their lives, foreshadowing untimely death decades later (Peterson et al 1998; Peterson 2000). So, research proves that a pessimistic explanatory style may eventually lead to death.

Life is a mixing pot of controllable and uncontrollable events that happen and reality does not exist independently of how we act and interpret life. Optimism, which can be learned, is extremely important because that is the external form of positive thinking. If one does not act on a thought, it will simply stay a thought and never materially develop.

Positive thinking's underlying factors of faith and purpose helps to battle pessimism and learned helplessness through optimism. Having constant and unrelenting faith and a strong purpose in life helps one to be an optimist. One is able to handle adversity successfully, which is one way of describing an optimist (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 5, p 3516).

(H1B: Positive thinking leads to an optimistic explanatory style.)

Optimism: Behavior or Personality

There has been much controversy over whether optimism is learned or hereditary. Although, some "studies suggest that explanatory style is moderately heritable, there is no reason to believe that there is a specific optimism-pessimism gene (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 13, p 8585)." Seligman (1991) believes that optimism can be learned. Actually, one of his books, "Learned Optimism," tells that pessimism can be altered and changed through cognitive training techniques (Seligman 1991). Schulman (1999) expands on Seligman's topic of Learned Optimism and says that even the most positive optimists have negative days when exposed to severe stress and can also benefit from the cognitive training techniques.

I agree with Seligman and believe that optimism can be learned, and I will go a step further and say that one can be trained to have an optimistic personality, not just optimistic behavior. Optimistic behavior and a positive personality can be learned through learning to be optimistic.

Mischel (1968) states that behavior would be relatively simple to modify if stable and highly generalized response patterns occurred regularly in different situations. So, if one worked on finding a purpose in life, focused on faith, and worked on changing one's explanatory style to an optimistic explanatory style, then one would respond to most bad events the same optimistic way, which would change one's behavior. Mischel (1968)

holds that personality is an abstract form of behavior where behavior consists of observable events. One's observable behavior serves as clues to one's personality, which would hold that optimism, the external form of positive thinking, would serve as a clue that one would have an optimistic or positive personality.

Personality is defined as stable and consistent, so a possible change in personality will be slower, smaller, and more gradual than changes in behavior (Weinberger 1994; Mischel 1968). DiClemente (1994) also tackles the question of "can personality change?" In his argument he uses the term "addiction," which is almost synonymous to the term "personality." "Addicts are individuals who appear to be locked into stable, persistent, long-term patterns of behavior," which is very similar to the definition of personality. DiClemente's research points out that change takes years to accomplish, but he maintains that behavioral and personality change are possible. He goes on to state that "personality change is probably best understood as part of the aftereffects of the process of change, rather than more direct and immediate change."

There is a general consensus between physiologists that personality can and does change until the age of about 30, but opinions differ on what happens after that age. Some say personality is more stable after 30, while some take an opposite standpoint and say that more powerful changes may occur in regards to personality after the age of 30 (Weinberg 1994). Because I am not a physiologist, I cannot make a professional decision on what stance I take in terms of deciding if change happens throughout one's entire life or just before the age of 30. I will say though, that because there is so much controversy over this topic and so much research on both sides of the controversy, I would not simply be taking an optimistic view if I said that change can occur throughout one's life, because there is research to prove that. If it is accepted that people go through fundamental changes in personality, it is then plausible that people can thrust change upon themselves (Heatherton & Nichols 1994).

In terms of behavior affecting personality, one's basic, central tendencies constitute one's core of their personality (Weinberg 1994). So, if a basic tendency was to be optimistic, then that would constitute for being a core aspect of one's personality.

Further elaborating on the theory that optimism is learned and is not hereditary is a concept that personality is internally originated. "One of the possible models of

personality change involves internalization. For example, young women do not magically develop maternal personalities, nor are these traits always visible during their youth prior to motherhood, but upon assuming the role of mother a woman may begin to change her behavior, and over time these new patterns of maternal behavior can become firmly established to the point that the woman's personality can be said to have change to fit the role (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 16, Pp 11279-11280)."

DiClemente (1994) also points out that cognitive levels play an important role in personality change. In terms of internal cognition, if that aspect is focused on one's purpose, then one level of positive thinking is in place, which assists in attaining the behavior and personality of an optimist.

Research from Mischel (1968) concludes that the situation one is in is 10 times more powerful than personality. This research proves that you are what you are around. The situation one puts oneself in plays an extremely integral part in one's life in determining behavior. Behavior is a critical link in attaining and sustaining well-being in one's life, which is linked to optimism (Peterson 2000). Well-being does not occur exclusively within the mind, but occurs within a being, which has its place in the physical world (Peale 1952; Peterson 2000).

The surrounding that one puts oneself in to help achieve one's purpose and help one's ohana is extremely important. DiClement (1994) showed much research on how recovering addicts who had stable and physically comforting relationships and more family cohesion positively affected their addictive behavior. One's ohana plays a major role in changing behavior and personality.

(H2C: Positive thinking leads to optimistic behavior and a positive personality.)

Positive Affect

Positive Affect is a tendency to respond and reflect to one's environment with positive emotions and reactions (Watson, Clark, and Carey 1988; Corsini 1999, p 739). High positive affect incorporates optimism and how one reflects one's enthusiasm, energy level, mental alertness, concentration level, interest, joy, and determination. Negative affect is an ingredient in depression and often reflects lethargy, sadness, and fatigue. Like many aspects of optimism, positive affect has been known to have positive

influences in physical health (Watson, Clark, and Carey 1988; Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 7, pp 4456-4457).

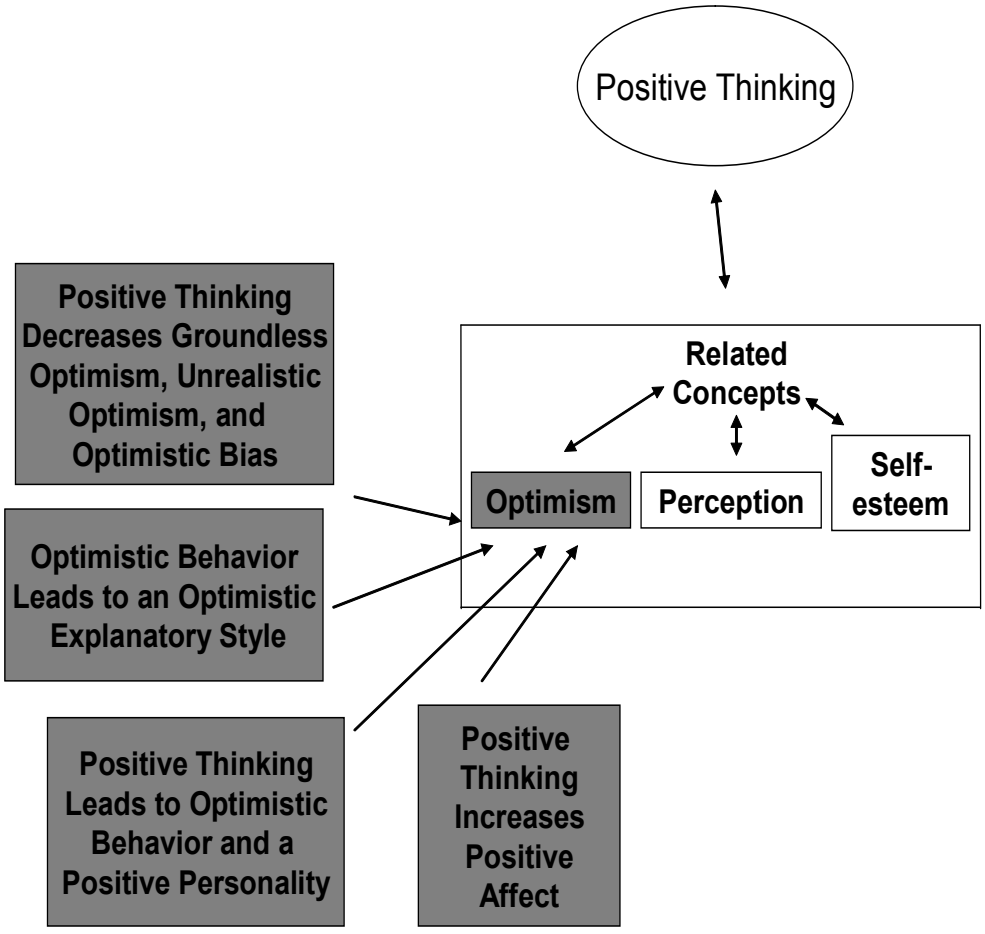
A ten-item mood scale called the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was developed to measure positive and negative affect and is reliable, valid, and an efficient way for measuring these moods (Watson, Clark, Tellegen 1988). The PANAS obtains "ratings with seven different temporal instructions (Watson, Clark, Tellegen 1988)." Subjects are asked to rate how they feel or felt in the short term and long term (e.g. "right now," "today," "during the past few days," etc.), and then the subjects are instructed to rate the extent to which they experienced each mood state, which determines their positive/negative affect level (Watson, Clark, Tellegen 1988).

Why is staying positive and feeling positive emotions, through optimism, so important? This concept is something everyone intuitively knows and there is finally research to prove it. Barbara Frederickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions suggests that "positive emotions transform people for the better, giving them better lives in the future." Frederickson's research suggests that positive emotions broaden one's scope "of attention, cognition, and action" by widening the thoughts and actions that come to the mind, which also "build physical, intellectual, and social resources." Positive emotions broaden one's cognition, which assists one's internal cognition in positive thinking. With more internal cognition comes more attention being focused on one's purpose.

Optimism may have many sources, which could "be based in spiritual beliefs, religious beliefs, religious faith, and other beliefs in powers outside the self (Aspinwall & Brunhart 2000)." The possible bases that were just mentioned are the basis of positive thinking.

(H2D: Positive thinking increases positive affect.)

Figure 3: Optimism within the PTM



Chapter 3B: Perception

Perception is a very important topic with positive thinking because positive thinking *is* how a perceiver perceives a situation. For example, take the situation given earlier about the weather. If it is sunny out, an optimist might say, "What a beautiful day," and if it is rainy out, an optimist might say, "I'm sure it will be sunny soon." A positive thinker, on the other hand, would already be thinking, "It's going to be a great day today," and as they see the external situations, what the weather is like outside, they will frame what they see so they perceive it positively. Positive thinkers first focus internally to decide how they want to feel. They will then change how they perceive the external world to be, which will be through optimism.

Perception gives meaning, or lack there of, to an individual's environment. It is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions (Robbins 1998). Positive thinking changes ones perception to focus internally, not circumstantially. This chapter on perception is divided into self-perception, locus of control, and the attribution theory.

Self-perception

"Self perception and perception of other people are closely related (Smelser and Baltes 2001)." How one views oneself, an aspect of self-esteem that is covered in chapter 3C, is closely related to how one views other people. I would also venture to say how one views oneself is closely related to how one views external situations, as well.

Since the work of Daryl Bem (Bem 1970) in the 1960s, the assumption that self-perception and perception of other people are closely related is widely known by social psychologists. Bem states that "to us, observers, the most important clues to an individual's states are found in his behavior. When we want to know how a person feels, we look to see how he acts."

Bem (1970) states that self-perception starts at childhood. Parents must guess how a child internally feels by his external actions. The child is the only one who has access to his internal state, so observers teach us how to describe our internal perceptions on external clues that the observer perceives. Bem's self-perception theory states that "in identifying his own internal states, an individual partially relies on the same external

clues that others see when they infer his internal states," which was also partially mentioned in the optimism chapter. Positive thinkers' "external clues" will be through optimistic behavior/personality. So, the optimistic external clues are hints to what is going on internally through one's self-perception, which is based in positive thinking.

The concept that one is what one is around, which was shown in the previous chapter on optimism, also pertains to self-perception. If one perceives other people as marvelous people, one will perceive oneself as a marvelous person, and vice versa. If one thinks positively about oneself, one will have a better chance of thinking positively about the external world. How one perceives the external environment and others is a close mirror image of how one perceives oneself.

(H3A: Positive thinking increases positive self-perception.)

Locus of Control

"Locus of control measures beliefs about personal causation (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003)." People with an internal locus of control feel as if they are masters of their own destiny, and originate much control over their life. Hence, they are often referred to as "origins." "Pawns," on the other hand, are those who have an external locus of control and believe they do not have much control over their destiny, and are victims of fate and external circumstance (Rotter 1966; Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003).

Locus of Control and beliefs about how much control one has over one's life need not be confused with optimism, which it often is (Aspinwall & Brunet 2000). Locus of Control originates within one's internal cognition, which is associated with purpose and positive thinking. Locus of Control happens internally with positive thinking, and optimism occurs externally.

The concept of interest seems to be very important to one's locus of control. "To experience interest, by definition, implies that one is interested in something…If interest is the psychic "relational mechanism" between person and world, then those who honor interest would also be more likely to believe that the ability to influence one's fate is also high (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003)." Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2003) say that, "interest does not occur without a referent." They also say that "interest requires action."

Interest is spawned from one's purpose within positive thinking, and as stated before, positive thinking is an internal action. The external form of positive thinking is optimism, which is where interest is externally shown. Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi (2003) conclude by saying "that those who experience a great deal of interest in their lives would also likely believe they are the volitional force behind their actions," and the "volitional force" is precisely positive thinking.

There has been much research conducted with students, showing that interested students show chronic interest in everyday life experiences, while bored students experience widespread boredom (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003; Larson 2000). Interested students are more likely to have a greater internal locus of control than bored students. Interested students not only have positive feelings about the future, but are also more positive about growing older than bored students (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003).

More research on interested and bored students surprisingly shows that honors students were just as likely to feel boredom. An interesting finding is that 50% of any particular day, students report boredom. The students "communicate an ennui of being trapped in the present, waiting for someone to prove to them that life is worth living (Larson 2000)." If positive thinking was present in youths' lives, boredom would be less of an occurrence because a purpose and a driving force would have already been instilled within the youths' lives.

Locus of Control can be measured with Spector's Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) (Spector 1988). "The WLCS is a 16-item scale that employers use to measure employee's beliefs about their control over their business and organizational outcomes. Eight items are worded in an external fashion and eight items are worded in an internal fashion (Raja, Johns, Ntalianis 2004)." Two examples of worded items are: "it takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee on most jobs," and "on most jobs, people can pretty much accomplish whatever they set out to accomplish." The WLCS shows the extent to which one has an internal or external locus of control. An interesting finding is that having an external locus of control is positively related to breach of contract (Raja, Johns, Ntalianis 2004).

Langer and Robin (1976) conducted an experiment where half of the elderly residents living in a nursing home were experimentally given more control over their living condition, and their sense of control was increased. This half of the elderly patients were told that they were in charge of making choices regarding their living conditions (e.g. when to watch a movie and what plant they wanted for their room) and changing things was in their power and was their responsibility. The other half of the elderly patients living in the nursing home were told that they would be treated well and should be happy. No interventions were done on their behalf.

Many weeks later the elderly half that had more control had higher ratings of happiness, activity, alertness, and health, even though there had been no difference when the experiment started. Startling results were found 18 months later when Robin and Langer (1977) evaluated the experiment again to find that 15% of the elderly group given more control had died; where as the group who were told that they "should be happy" had doubled their death rate to 30%! As shown by this example, a higher internal locus of control leads to a happier, more active, and healthier life, and a higher external locus of control leads to sickness and, in the experiment just sited, to increased death.

A very interesting and important issue in positive thinking is combining internal locus control, having more control within oneself, and religious faith, which teaches the concept of surrendering oneself to God. There has been much research shown that both an internal locus of control and a high religious faith increase physical and mental health. "All three Western religions, as well as most Eastern traditions, focus on our duty to give up control in relation to God, to remember that we are not the masters of our destiny and that we ought to be subservient to God by sacrificing our ego for His and surrendering our life to Him (Eckstein 2000)."

Too much of a good thing can, in fact, turn into a bad thing. Having too high of an internal locus of control might fault someone and make them believe that they can achieve everything in life on their own, without any help from God or from their ohana. They might actually turn stubborn and not allow any help to aid them. On the other hand, relying falsely in God that He will simply make a life for a person without one putting physical and mental work is also a faulty belief. "With all its fine features, and the fact that it can create happiness and well-being, we must never forget that faith can also have

a very dark side, as history attests (Eckstein 2000).” Working hand-in-hand with God and developing a strong purpose in life within positive thinking, both aid in a balanced locus of control, with both internal and external aspects playing factors in one’s life.

“Although locus of control might distinguish people who believe in astrology from those who do not, it may not differentiate potential entrepreneurs from potential managers or just plain business students (Dollinger 2003).” Having a balance between an internal locus of control and an external locus of control, putting one’s faith in God, will lead a more balanced, successful, and happy life.

(H3B: Positive thinking balances one’s locus of control, with internal and external aspects showing.)

Attribution Theory

The Attribution Theory explains how individuals make judgments about themselves and others (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 2 Pp 915-16), or what individuals attribute their success and failures to. Individuals explain causes either internally, having the cause come from within themselves, or externally, having the cause originate from an outside source (Kelly 1967). There is a “tendency for people to explain their own positive and negative outcomes so as to maintain favorable self-perception or public impressions (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 2 Pp 915-16).” This concept is often referred to as the internal-external dichotomy (Kelly 1967), and is closely related to the self-serving bias (Bradley 1978).

People who are self-serving in their explanations tend to take more credit for their success than their failures. Bradley (1978) explains that there are many possible reasons why an individual takes more credit for successes than for failures: (a) “Individuals intend and expect success more than failure,” and are more likely to take credit for the expected outcomes; (b) Individuals who experience constant failure are more likely to perceive connections between responses and outcomes; and (c) Individuals inaccurately base their outcomes between response and outcome in terms of their preferred outcome (e.g. success) rather than the actual outcome. Happy people tend to “exhibit a self-serving bias, by believing themselves [to be] more ethical, intelligent, unprejudiced, sociable, and healthier than the average person (Myers 1999) (Myers 2000, p 329).”

For example, students who receive good grades would explain the successful outcome with internal causes (e.g. "I'm smart," or "I worked hard"). Vice versa, students who receive bad grades explain with external causes (e.g. "I had bad luck," or "My teacher was unfair") (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 2 Pp 915-16).

The actor-observer asymmetry (Jones & Nisbett 1972) is an aspect of the attribution theory and is closely related to the internal-external dichotomy and the self-serving bias. Individuals refer to their own behavior by referring to external factors (e.g." I chose my major as psychology because it is interesting"), while individuals explain other people's behavior by associating with internal attributes (e.g. "She chose psychology as her major because she wants to help people") (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 2 Pp 915-16).

Individuals, or actors, "attribute their actions to situational requirements, whereas observers tend to attribute the same actions to stable personal dispositions. This tendency often stems in part from the actor's need to justify blameworthy action…actors try to excuse their reprehensible actions by blaming them on circumstances, whereas observers are coldly, perhaps gleefully ready to put the shoe of blame on the actor's foot (Jones & Nisbett 1972)."

Through all this research, it is shown that individuals take more responsibility for positive outcomes than negative outcomes. The actor-observer theory tries to "justify blameworthy action." Well, instead of attempting to justify why it is happening, why not attempt to simply stop it from happening? Positive thinking attempts to have more positive outcomes, which come from an internal purpose aided by God and one's ohana, so to eliminate "blameworthy action." Positive thinking aids one to attribute and take more responsibility for positive outcomes, but also change the way in which one perceives negative outcomes. So, the concept of "blameworthy action" would not exist and that experience would simply be something to learn from, which is a negative concept transformed into a positive concept.

"Individuals tend to accept responsibility for positive behavioral outcomes and to deny responsibility for negative behavioral outcomes (Bradley 1978)."

"Research has shown that the belief that one will succeed produces over-achievement and the belief that one will fail produces under-achievement (Schulman

1999).” The drive behind one’s purpose, a belief in God, and the love and care from one’s ohana all aid in the possibility of success happening.

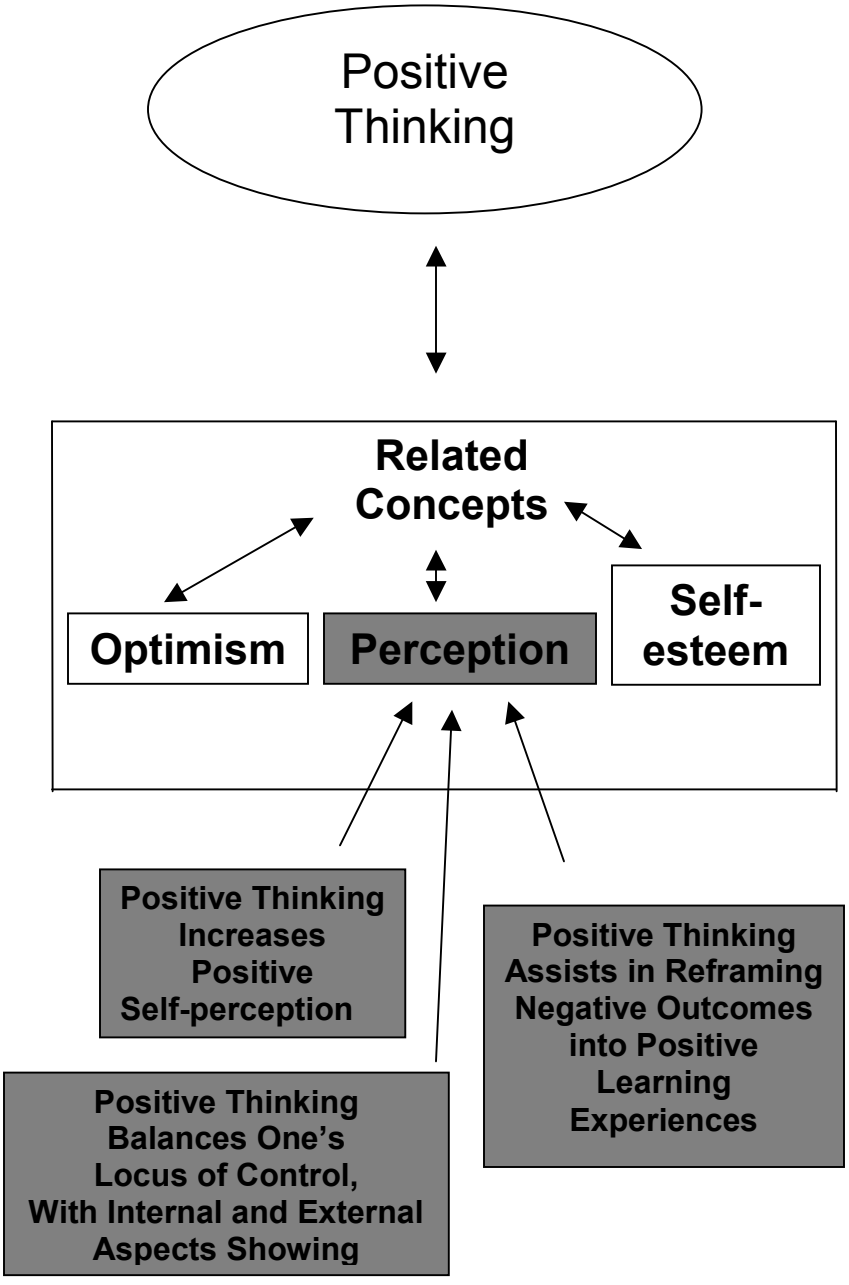
“When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, we have labeled this a belief in external control. If the person perceived that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control (Rotter 1966).” This deals very closely with locus of control.

One theory of the internalization process maintains that when one is induced to act in a certain way, one begins to recall other behaviors that are consistent with that behavior, and also begins to ignore previous acts that would not be consistent. One’s self-concept eventual shifts to accommodate these patterns of behavior, and then this theory holds that one’s personality will follow suite as well (Jones et al. 1981; Fazio 1981). “The implication is that secret and private behaviors do not lead to internalization as much as do public, interpersonal behaviors. The social context—specifically, whether other people are there to witness the behavior—is decisive as to whether behaviors lead to inner change (Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 16, Pp 11277-80).”

Through positive thinking, one begins to act and think in ways that focus on one’s purpose. The focus on attainment of achieving one’s purpose helps one to reframe seemingly negative experiences in one’s life, to positive experiences. Because one is focused on their purpose, positive thinking helps to reframe the thinking of an individual to take a positive, learning experience away from a seemingly negative experience, which hindered the completion of one’s purpose.

(H3C: Positive thinking assists in reframing negative outcomes into positive learning experiences.)

Figure 4: Perception within the PTM



Chapter 3C: Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the degree to which one likes or dislikes oneself; the personal perceptions of self-appreciation and self-worth (Robbins 1998; Raja, Johns, Ntalianis 2004). Self-esteem, being one of the Big Five personality traits, is very important to maintaining a positive internal core (Judge & Bono 2001).

Seligman says that the self-esteem trend, maintaining that people should feel good about themselves at all times, makes people feel that there is something fundamentally wrong with them if they don't feel good. Having something fundamentally wrong with oneself is pretty depressing and positive psychologists deem this thinking pattern as totally unrealistic (Easterbook 2001). "The preaching of self-esteem in schools, Seligman thinks, has backfired by increasing melancholy (Easterbook 2001)."

I agree with Seligman on the concept that one doesn't always have to feel good about oneself, but I think that one should always think that one is always a good and worthy person. Let me clarify my point because the two concepts may seem like they are the same. It's alright if one doesn't feel 100% satisfied with oneself, because that will serve as a motivator to work harder to reach one's goals. While highs and lows happen in one's life, which often occur, I think it is necessary in positive thinking that one knows within one's self-esteem that one is still a worthwhile and great individual. Thinking badly about oneself will only lead to negative thoughts within one's internal cognition, which will be detrimental to one's purpose in life.

As stated in chapter two, where I attempted to define positive thinking, I mentioned that one of the three vital relationships within positive thinking is a good relationship with oneself. That relationship is shown through self-esteem. Throughout this section of my thesis I will focus on high vs. low self-esteem, self-esteem stability, and self concept in relation to my concepts of positive thinking.

High vs. Low Self-Esteem

The level of one's self-esteem directly affects expectations for success and job satisfaction. Research confirms that people with high self-esteems believe they posses the ability to succeed in work and in life, in general (Robbins 1998). They are also more

likely to take more risks in job selection and are more likely to choose unconventional jobs than people with low self-esteems (Robbins 1998).

One of the most common findings on self-esteem is that people with low self-esteems are more susceptible to external influences than are people with high self-esteems (Robbins 1998), meaning the people with high self-esteem are based more firmly in their positive internal cognition. There is no purpose present in people who have low self-esteem and a positive internal relationship with oneself is not present, suggesting that positive thinking is lacking or simply not present. If people with low self-esteem are more susceptible to external influences, they are more dependent on the positive evaluations from others, which shows that there is a deficit of a positive internal force. Interestingly, research shows that in managerial positions, people who have low self-esteem tend to be concerned with pleasing others and are less likely to take unpopular stands than are people with high-self-esteem (Robbins 1998).

People with low self-esteem accept negative feedback more so than people with high self-esteem. Vice versa, people with high self-esteem accept positive feedback more so than people with low self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem are more concerned about avoiding a constant negative self-view (Kernis et al 1993). Because they are constantly thinking about avoiding negative thoughts in their internal cognition, they are unable to transfer over to think about positive thoughts, which are tied into finding and focusing in on one's purpose.

Tying in some findings on self-esteem with perception, interested students report significantly higher self-esteem than bored students (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003). Research shows that higher levels of self-esteem are associated with internal attributions for positive events, and lower self-esteem levels are associated with internal attributions for negative events (Brewin & Furnam 1986). Differentiating between the findings from the attribution theory in the last chapter on perception where both internal and external attributes played a part, levels of self-esteem are due to only internal attributions. So, the internal cognition aspect of positive thinking plays an integral part of self-esteem. Interestingly, research found that depression is related to internal attributions of negative events, but not to positive events (Brewin & Furnam 1986; Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993). Low self-esteem, a self-esteem deficit, has been proven to be a major cause and

defining feature of depression (Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993; Freud 1986). Hunter and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) add that "depression makes the world dull, gray, and lifeless."

Expanding on the thought that external and situational factors play a part in self-esteem, a person's perception, and the responsibility they take for what happened (e.g. sadness evoking) to bring about an event will influence their evaluation of the event (Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993). "Hence, if an individual bears clear-cut responsibility for the loss, then it will be difficult to escape an internal attribution and the subsequent loss of self-esteem that will ensue in the depression (Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993)."

Research shows that elderly persons who perceive pessimism and futility about their futures are positively correlated with lost interpersonal worth and difficulty in recovering spiritual faith. Within this research was developed The Geriatric Scale of Hoplessness to measure these perceptions and correlations (Fry 1984; Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 10, pp. 6907-09). Another measurement of self-esteem is the eight item Rosenberg Global Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965). An example of an item on the scale is, "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal place with others."

Jumping to the early parts of an individual's life, many agree that the foundation of self-esteem originates in infancy (Fenichel 1945; Becker 1979). When an infant's relationship to its parent is not secure, it hampers the ability of the child to differentiate itself from others and find gratification from sources other than its parent (Becker 1979; Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993). Because an infant's needs can only be met by other people, self-esteem is strongly dependent on interpersonal relations (Fenichel 1945), which is one's ohana. A child is extremely dependent on its ohana in infancy, and if a positive relation is developed at a young age, an aspect of positive thinking is instilled within the infant. Children who are securely attached to their parents are rated as having higher self-esteems, and are more self-confident, curious, and persistent in problem solving (Sameroff & Emde 1989).

On the other hand, greater degrees of depression and self-esteem deficits are demonstrated by children who have avoidant patterns of attachment and insecurities (Sameroff & Emde 1989). "Developmental difficulties in interpersonal relating can lead to impaired self-esteem, which in turn, may predispose some individuals to depression

(Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993).” Research shows that children who had inadequate parenting and negative elements in close relationships were five times more likely to have a low self-esteem, and correspondingly, more depression (Brown, Bifulco, & Andrews 1990). This all leads to the issue of the relationship one has with one’s ohana and oneself. If there is a grounding of positive thinking, which an aspect is a good relationship with one’s ohana and oneself, self-esteem will increase.

(H4A: Positive thinking increases self-esteem.)

Self-Esteem Stability

Research indicates “that both stability and level of self-esteem are important predictors of individuals’ cognitive and emotional reactions to interpersonal evaluations (Kernis et al 1993).” As the reactivity of one’s unstable high self-esteem becomes greater, the desire to achieve and maintain a more stable and secure self-view becomes more predominant. One way to change an unstable self-esteem to a stable self-esteem is to embrace positive feedback (Kernis et al 1993). To increase stability, the relationships with God and one’s ohana need to increase, because positive thinking underscores those relationships.

People with an unstable low self-esteem view negative feedback as more accurate (Kernis et al 1993), which was stated earlier about simply the level of self-esteem. A low and unstable self-esteem could be directly related to helplessness within the concept of optimism, reviewed earlier in chapter 3A. Since reality is simply one’s perception of the present situation, stated earlier in the thesis, then people with an unstable and low self-esteem are pessimistic. Pessimism lacks a base of positive thinking, since optimism is lacking.

The reason for instability differs between the two different levels of self-esteem. People with a high self-esteem are concerned about achieving and maintaining a more secure and stable self-view, while individual’s containing a low self-esteem contain a heightened concern and defensiveness about avoiding a constant negative self-view (Kernis et al 1993). “The hallmark of stable low self-esteem is a chronic dislike for oneself (Kernis et al 1993).” The goal of people who have unstable low self-esteems is to avoid a stable low self-esteem. People who have instability within their low self-esteems

seem to have environmental and personal constraints, which position a positive self-view beyond their immediate grasp (Kernis et al 1993).

In other words this research show that if people who have an unstable low self-esteem keep doing what they are doing, they will continue to get what they have been getting. So, something is obviously lacking that people with a high self-esteem have. I believe one important aspect is positive thinking. Positive thinking focuses, through the internal cognition aspect, on the internal environment, on making it positive within a person. Once the positive internal cognition is present, a positive external form of it can be released, through optimism, so the external and internal environments of a person match. Individuals containing a low self-esteem can't even comprehend dealing with positive events and concepts; they can only deal with battling against the negative. A good relationship with oneself is not present and an internal clash of thoughts takes place.

The greater degree of instability, the greater amount of importance is placed on physical attractiveness and competence as determinants of self-worth. People with a stable self-esteem perceive social acceptance as weak importance. Over reliance could take place without people actually being aware that they are doing it (Kernis et al 1993), which is directly related to positive thinking. People with unstable self-esteems are choosing not choose, which goes back to the example of a person making a decision on how one chooses to feel before one opens one's eyes in the morning to see what the whether looks like, described in chapter 2. People with an unstable self-esteem lack purpose and important relationships with their ohana and God, and also lack heavenly guidance. They lack positive thinking.

(H4B: Positive thinking increases self-esteem stability.)

Self-Concept

Self-esteem is the evaluative portion of one's self-concept, which allows one to hold a positive or negative view toward him or herself (Rosenberg 1979). In this view, "the drive to preserve self-esteem is a primary motive in human striving (Bernet, Ingram, & Johnson 1993)." What is human striving? What are humans striving for? Striving is associated with motivation, but the thing that "humans" are striving for is a goal, a

purpose. They are striving for a life purpose, which is an underlying piece of foundation for positive thinking.

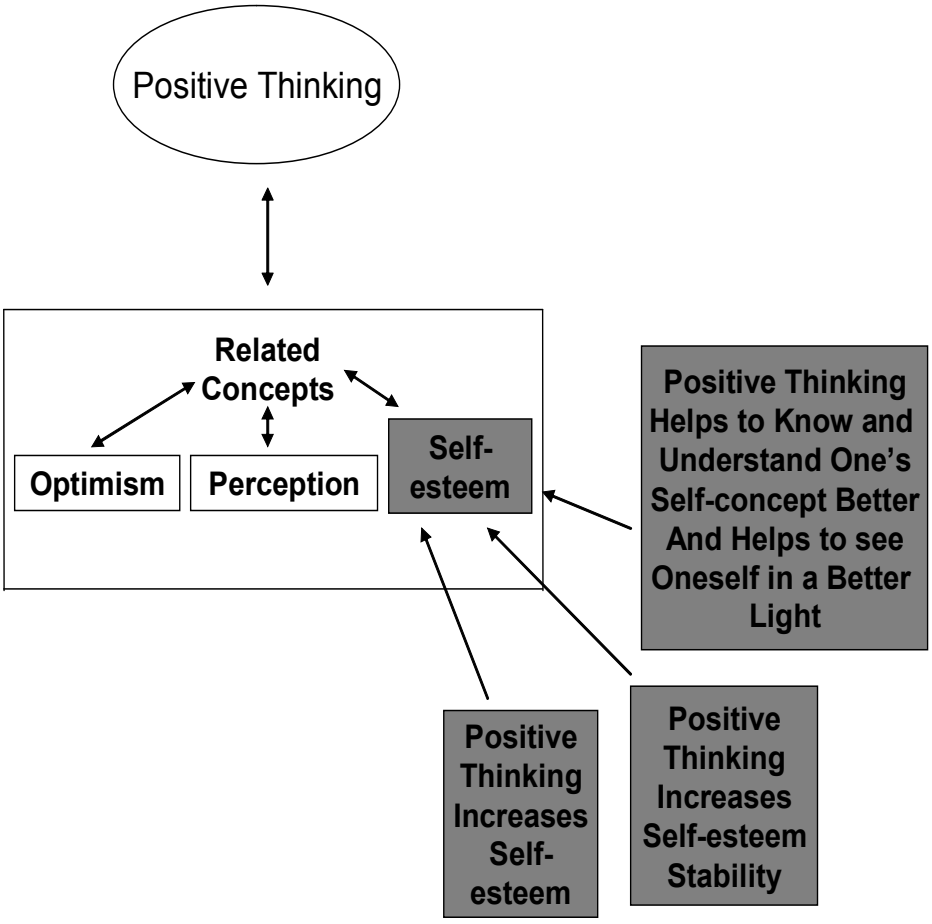
"Having a poorly developed self-concept could lead individuals to rely on, and be more affected by, specific evaluative information, thereby contributing to unstable self-esteem (Kernis et al 1993)." So, the reason for having an unstable self-esteem could be a poorly developed self-concept (Kernis et al 1993). People who don't really know themselves, or have a poorly developed self-concept, have no underlying purpose, and are not positive thinkers.

Having a negative affect, reviewed in the section on optimism, has negative influences upon one's cognition, self-concept, and world view (Watson, Clark, and Carey 1988). Also, "maintaining one's positive view of oneself in the face of threats to the self-concept may result in appropriate modulation of negative information and subsequent self-improvement (Alloy, Abramson, & Chiara 2000)." Since positive thinking increases positive affect, then positive thinking would most likely increase one's understanding of one's self-concept and help to see it in a better light, since positive affect most likely has the opposite reaction from negative affect.

One of the main concepts of positive thinking is to instill a purpose within a person. This purpose helps to develop, shape, and form one's internal cognition. This process helps to form one's self-concept, which is evaluated or shown by the level and stability of one's self-esteem. A high and stable self-esteem would therefore be the evaluation of one's self-concept, which would encompass a good understanding of one's self-concept. I attempted to show that positive thinking increases the level of self-esteem and the stability of self-esteem, and therefore would increase the level of understanding one has for one's self-concept.

(H4C: Positive thinking helps to know and understand one's self-concept better, and helps to see oneself in a better light.)

Figure 5: Self-esteem within the PTM



Chapter 4: Causes of Positive Thinking

"There are various distraction techniques that help to temporarily steer attention away from negative beliefs. These techniques include: use a thought stopping technique that breaks the train of pessimistic thoughts (such as focusing on the surrounding or snapping a rubber band on one's wrist), schedule a time to think things over, write down the troublesome thoughts (if there is time for this), engage in mental games such as counting backwards from 100 by increments of 7, and use positive imagery such as vividly imagining a pleasurable experience from the past or recalling a success. These cognitive techniques teach individuals how to tune in to and change the internal dialogue that goes on within is all but that often goes unquestioned and unchallenged (Schulman 1999)."

The last sentence in the previous passage is very important and is insinuating towards one's internal cognition. Many people have many different concepts of how to "tune in to" those thoughts, or what I call positive thinking, but I believe it stems from a want to get something. The "want" is motivation and the "to get something" is a goal. Like what was mentioned earlier in the thesis, positive thinking encompasses many concepts from concentrating on one's internal cognition to focus on one's purpose, to having faith and spirituality, to having good relationships, to finally externally showing positive thinking through optimism. Before any of those aspects can happen though, a want and a drive must exist to acquire those things.

This chapter on motivation and goal setting, the antecedents to positive thinking, will be broken down and analyzed in regards to positive thinking. Motivation and goal setting are extremely important aspects of positive thinking because they are the roots of inspiration in one's life.

Chapter 4A: Motivation

The Learned Helplessness theory, one of the topics discussed in the related concept of optimism, states "that an individual who believes he has no control over a desired objective will be unlikely to make the effort necessary to achieve that objective

(Seligman 1975).” A major psychological consequence of this belief is that there is a loss of motivation (Schulman 1999). When this characteristic is in extreme form it is a symptom of clinical depression (Schulman 1999). The relationship between positive thinking and optimism was already established previously in the thesis, but the relationship of motivation passing through positive thinking leading to optimism has not yet been discussed. Not only can motivation steer away from depression (Schulman 1999), but it can also be a factor to influence positive thinking. The topics of interest, initiative, positive self-talk, and passion will be discussed in the following section on how motivation is an antecedent to positive thinking.

Interest

Stringing the thought of “interest” throughout the thesis, “interest is present from birth and fosters human development by mobilizing resources for worldly engagement (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003).” Some of the qualities involved in the positive state of ‘interest’ are fascination and being in a state of excitement (Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi 2003), which lead to motivation and positive thinking. Being fascinated or in a state of excitement leads one to think about purpose or meaning, which is an aspect of positive thinking.

Apathy, on the other hand, is described as having a loss of interest or a lack of emotion (Agnes 1999). Loss of interest leads to depression (Klinger 1993), so neither fascination nor the state of excitement is present. Motivation deficits are a central feature of depression (Beck 1967; Klinger 1993), which involve a decrease of self-esteem. A hypothesis of mine in the section on self-esteem is that positive thinking increases self-esteem. So, if interest increases motivation, then an increase in motivation, passing through positive thinking, would increase self-esteem.

(H5A: Interest increases motivation, which leads to positive thinking.)

Initiative

Initiative is the “ability to be motivated from within to direct attention and effort towards a challenging goal (Larson 2000).” Initiative is closely related to interest, in the fact that both of them spawn motivation and lead to positive thinking.

Initiative incorporates "intrinsic motivation, the experience of wanting to be doing an activity and being invested in it (Larson 2000)." The focal motivational type of positive thinking is intrinsic motivation, not extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is "caused by positive internal feelings…Intrinsically motivates people are driven to act for the fun or challenge associated with a task rather than because of external rewards, pressures, or requests. Motivation comes from the psychological rewards associated with doing well in a task that one enjoys…In contrast to completing tasks for the joy of doing them, extrinsic motivation drives people's behavior when they do things in order to attain a specific outcome. In other words, extrinsic motivation is fueled by a person's desire to avoid or achieve some type of consequence for his or her behavior (Kreitner & Kinicki 2004)."

The intrinsic motivation spawned from initiative must occur over time because "initiative involves a temporal arc of effort directed toward a goal (Larson 2000)." Initiative generates intrinsic motivation, if one is absorbed, excited, and involved in the activity at hand (Larson 200), which leads one to think about the initiative in their internal cognition. Like what was mentioned in the previous section on 'interest,' constantly thinking about one's initiative and what interests one will lead to further contemplation on one' purpose.

Daily activities and experiences for children that are structured are more apt to lead to initiative than schooling and unstructured leisure activities, which occupy much of children and teens' time and lead to boredom rather than engagement (Larson 2000; Rich 2003). The intrinsic motivation must "be experiences in association with concerted engagement in the environment, with exertion of constructed attention in a field of action involving the types of constraints, rules, challenges, and complexities that characterize external reality (Larson 2000)." Constructive attention must be given to children in order to attain initiative as well. "Constructive attention means that this thought and effort is not random but directed toward creating some form of order, synergy, or negentropy…This motivation and concerted engagement [must] occur over time (Larson 2000)."

Mentors who spend structured time with children also help to spawn initiative, intrinsic motivation, and positive thinking within youth because they help children to

focus on their larger focus. Whether the mentor is a teacher, a coach, or friend of a parent of a child, mentors can help initiate positive thinking into children by exciting children about different aspects of life. The mentor should help focus and keep the child's attention on the engaging activities.

Some believe that initiative is also necessary for positive child development and the development of "creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement (Larson 2000 p170)." Initiative generates intrinsic motivation, which passes through positive thinking. The aspect of positive thinking involving faith, spirituality, religion, and time spent with one's ohana increase the development of creativity, leadership, altruism, and civic engagement.

(H5B: Initiative increases intrinsic motivation, which leads to positive thinking.)

Positive self-talk

On Voltage's website, a world acclaimed personal trainer who was mentioned in the introduction chapter, it states, "one way is to use affirmations as a tool to get a handle on positive things," which is another way of saying positive self-talk. By repeating positive self-phrases one is reaffirming positive phrases to oneself everyday. The following phrases are given to students at Eagle University, a motivational leadership camp for high school and college students.

* * *

-I never allow another human being to make me feel less of me, because I'm O.K. and I love me, and I get what I want because I deserve it.

-I am powerful because I have a purpose.

-I have a magnificent obsession.

-I am committed to excellence.

* * *

Whether the following self-talk phrases are true at the time one is saying the phrases (e.g. about saying one has a magnificent obsession) aren't important, because those thoughts begin to become a vital aspect of one's internal cognition, which is the important aspect. Positive self-talk phrases begin to motivate individuals by one's

internal cognition constantly and continually being forced to think about one's purpose. The constant flow of positive phrases will hopefully soon penetrate into the mainstream flow of thought in one's internal cognition, leading one to have one's purpose at the forefront of one's mind. "A famous psychologist says, "There is a deep tendency in human nature to become precisely like that which you habitually imagine yourself to be (Peale 166).""

A mentor can also play an important role in a child's life by using positive self-phrases in everyday life. By repeating these phrases, one gets the child used to saying these phrases, which will encourage the child to say them by him or herself. If the mentor is close to the child, the mentor will possibly become part of the child's ohana, where trust is formed. The child will trust the mentor and trust what the mentor has to say about implementing positive self-phrases into everyday life. The positive thoughts about one's purpose begin to penetrate into the usual thinking pattern of one's internal cognition, which is a vital aspect of positive thinking.

(H5C: Positive self-talk increases intrinsic motivation, which leads to positive thinking.)

Passion

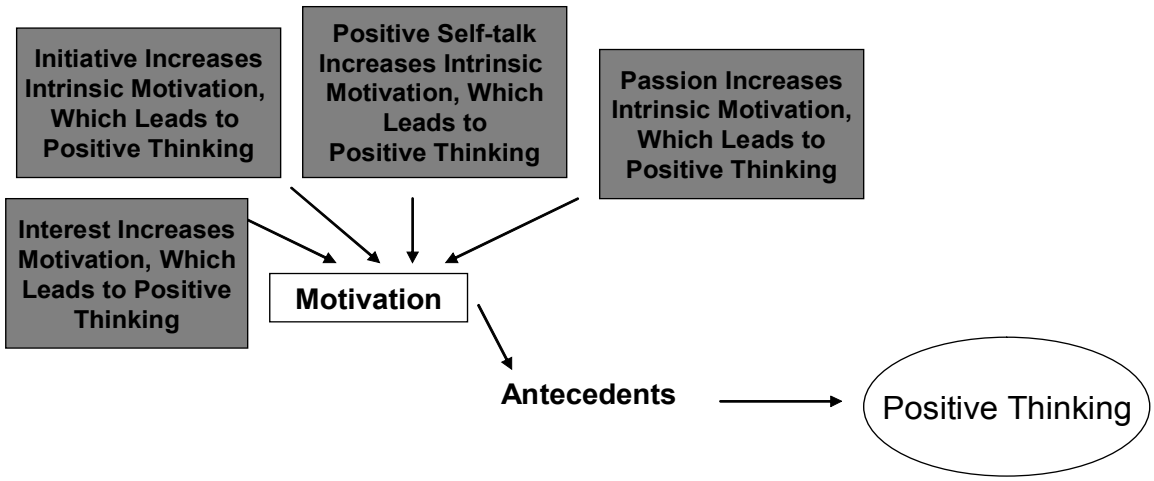
One definition of passion is "intense emotional drive or excitement (Agnes 1999)." Passion often gives individuals a deep want or craving for something "that causes a person to do something or act in a certain way (Agnes 1999)," which happens to be the definition of motive. The word 'motive' is used in the definition of 'motivation,' which is "to provide with, or affect as, a motive or motives (Agnes 1999)." Not only does passion serve as an extremely strong emotion, but "passion is strongly linked to motivation (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000)," as well.

Another definition of passion is "the sufferings of Jesus; any of the Gospel narratives of Jesus' passion and of the accompanying events (Agnes 1999)." "Spirituality promotes passion (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000)." One of the main aspects of positive thinking is having a strong sense of spirituality, which is often seen through religion. Like what was said earlier in the thesis, religion is a vehicle to allow one to find a bigger meaning in life. If one has a "passion" for religion, the other aspects of positive

thinking (e.g. having one's internal cognition aimed at one's purpose and having the three vital relationships) are not far behind. Religion often serves as an intrinsic motivation tool within itself, which leads one into positive thinking. Whether passion is referring to the definition of a strong emotion or the sufferings of Jesus in Christianity, passion "increases the belief that one's work is meaningful (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000)."

(**H5D: Passion increases intrinsic motivation, which leads to positive thinking.)**

Figure 6: Motivation within the PTM



Chapter 4B: Goal Setting

Motivation leads one to set goals (Agnes 1999). The aspects in the previous section on motivation all have a possibility to spawn a desire to achieve something or to become something, which often leads to one setting a goal to accomplish the task or idea. "Without a valued goal, there is no reason to act (Smelser & Baltes 2001 Vol. 5 p 3516)."

Children can be taught the important aspects of goal setting as young as the age of three (Flapan 1968). A child's vocabulary, as it grows from about 50 to 10,000 words between the ages of three to six, enhances the concept of hopeful thinking within children, because the child's enhanced vocabulary provides means for describing goals (Flapan 1968). Between the ages of seven to twelve, children expand their memory and knowledge through reading and physical exploration, which is used in the making and attaining of goals (Flapan 1968).

Recent studies show that goals and plans serve as both signs of current well-being and as a forecast of future well-being (Stein, Folkman, Trabasso, Richards 1997). I believe that the "signs of current well-being" encompass motivation, which activates one to start to focus on one's purpose, within one's internal cognition. As for goals serving as a "forecast of future well-being," I believe that goals serve as the main bridge or gap for most individuals to start being positive thinkers.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

If one has no chance of achieving the goals one has set for oneself, it's quite possible one will become disappointed, and stay content (or discontent) at their current position in life and not strive for more. S.M.A.R.T. goals is an acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, result oriented, and time bound goals (Kreitner & Kinicki 2004). Parameters must be set for goals, which help to obtain the attainment of the goals. If certain parameters are not set for goals, a diminished valuation of goals may happen, which can be seen through a behavioral loss of interest (Klinger 1993).

Organizations can promote S.M.A.R.T. goals into their organization through Management by Objective (MBO) (Kreitner & Kinicki 2004). MBO is a management

system that incorporates participation by employees in decision making, goal setting, and feedback (Kreitner & Kinicki 2004). By having not just the top management, but all of the employees of an organization having input on the goal setting and possible success of the company, the company is in turn also encouraging its employees to also be positive thinkers. When at work, the employee will be thinking about the underlying purpose of the company, not just the possible tedious tasks at hand. The underlying aspect of purpose instilled into the employee, by setting goals, will encourage positive thinking within the employees and the organization within itself.

(H6A: S.M.A.R.T. goals encourage proper goal setting, which leads to positive thinking.)

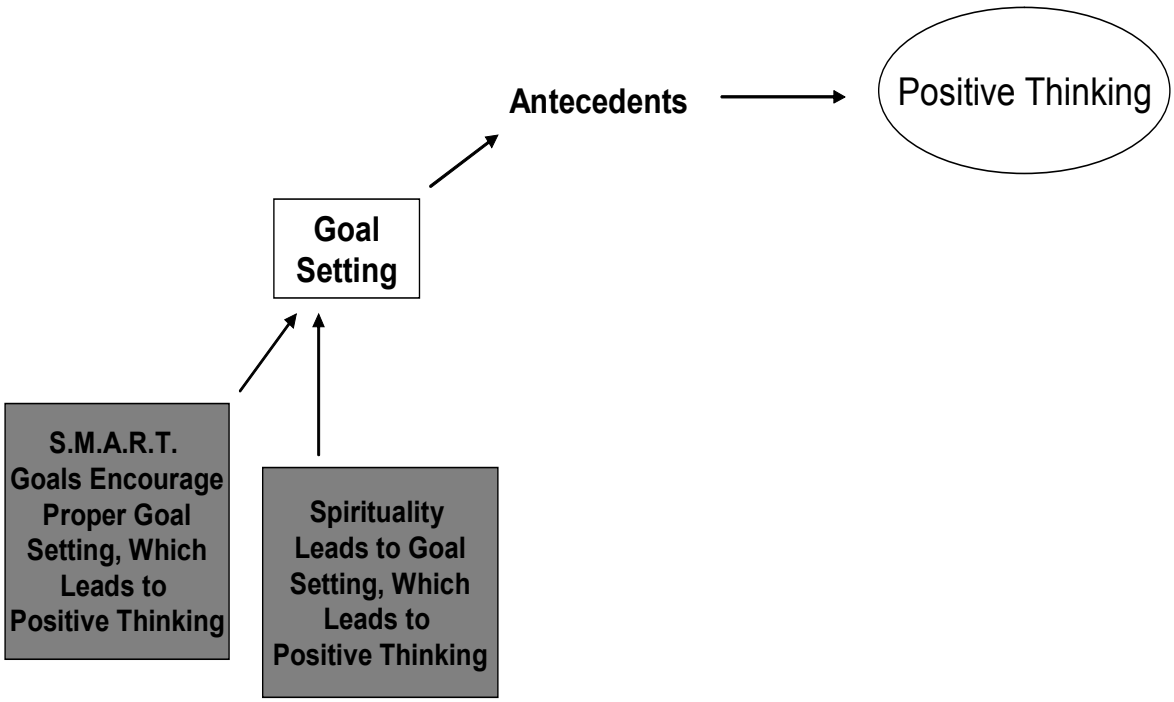
Spirituality

Spirituality helps to clarify goals and objectives (Bierly III, Kessler, Christensen 2000). Referring to the definition of passion associated with Christianity, as reviewed in the previous section on motivation, I believe that spirituality helps to motivate individuals, which is the step prior to setting goals. One must be motivated to do something in order to set a goal to accomplish it. As what Pastor Jim Cymbala said, head pastor at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, "with goals come purpose." When a goal is set, one's internal cognition is constantly thinking about accomplishing the goal and purpose for setting and accomplishing the goal, which leads one to thinking about one's larger purpose in life.

I do believe it's possible to have aspects of positive thinking without necessarily being a positive thinker. It is possible to be spiritual, or religious, without having the three vital relationships for complete positive thinking. When a person has one aspect of positive thinking, they feel some of the very powerful outcomes of positive thinking, which motivates and opens up the opportunity for that person to attain the other aspects of positive thinking.

(H6B: Spirituality leads to goal setting, which leads to positive thinking.)

Figure 7: Goal setting within the PTM



Chapter 5: Outcomes of Positive Thinking

"Some people are even happier than the rest of us—why is this? Sonjia Lyubormirsky (2001) offers an answer to the long unsolved issue of why some people are happier than other. The article states that happiness may actually be "in our heads," where people appreciate what they have, without dwelling on what they do not have. Positive thinking elaborates on this concept and is also precisely located "in our heads."

In much of the research stated in this chapter, optimism is proven to be a vital aspect in life satisfaction, health, and performance. Because optimism is the external form of positive thinking, I use this research in an attempt to prove that an increase in life satisfaction, health, and performance are all outcomes of positive thinking.

Chapter 5A: Life Satisfaction

Faith and spirituality, which can be found through religion, play a vital aspect in positive thinking and an increase in life satisfaction. Research has proven some of the benefits of religion in coping positively with crisis's. Religious women who worship regularly reported more joy in their lives than religious inactive women (Harvey, Barnes, & Greenwood 1987; McGloshen & O'Bryant 1988; Siegel & Kuykendall 1990). Mothers of disabled children with a deep religious faith are less vulnerable to depression than non religious mothers of disabled children (Friedrich, Cohen, & Wilturner 1988). Those with a strong faith also deem greater happiness after divorce, unemployment, serious illness, or bereavement (Ellison 1991; McIntosh, Silver, & Wortman 1993).

Motivation, an antecedent to positive thinking, is also related to religion and spirituality. Research shows that "more intrinsically motivated, religiously active persons report higher levels of life satisfaction and better coping with adversity, whether measured by level of spiritual commitment or religious attendance (Piotrowski 2003)."

A Gallop National Survey reports that religiously active people report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction in Europe and North America (Gallup 1984). From 1972 to 1994 the National Opinion Research Center surveys 32,000 Americans and religious attendance was directly correlated with self-reported happiness.

Research on the length of life, where 450 people who lived to the age of 100 were studied, showed that an important aspect in the all of their lives was having faith in God (Peale 1952, p 116). A meta-analysis of research on elderly people showed that religiousness and health were found to be the best two predictors of life (Okun & Stock 1987).

The two factors that may matter most in happy lives are marriage and religious belief (Corliss 2003). A vital relationship in positive thinking and a vital aspect of one's ohana, marriage, "has been repeatedly associated with greater happiness and life satisfaction as well as less depression and loneliness when compared to being divorced, separated, or never having been married (Piotrowski 2003)."

Happiness, which is a trait that marks happy lives (Myers & Diener 1995), increases one's overall life satisfaction and has many aspects of positive thinking incorporated within research. Three vital aspects of a happy life include one exhibiting a high self-esteem, showing optimism, and typically feeling personal control (Myers & Diener 1995; Piotrowski 2003). Personal control refers to one's locus of control, which I hypothesized that positive thinking equals out locus of control between internal and external controls, due to the effects of religion and letting oneself go to a higher power. So, three aspects which I attempted to prove in my thesis, self-esteem, optimism, and locus of control within perception, have been proven to increase happiness in life.

As stated in a previous chapter, people with a high self-esteem do not use the comparison of others as a measure of their own self-esteem, where people with a low self-esteem often do. Research has proven that the top indicator of overall life satisfaction is not comparing oneself to others (McDonald 2001).

I think a very important piece of research found on life satisfaction is that no age or sex is necessarily more satisfied than any other (Myers 2000, p 325; Inglehart 1990), which shows that all ages and both genders can incorporate positive thinking and can benefit from life satisfaction.

(H7A: Positive thinking increases life satisfaction.)

Chapter 5B: Health

Unending research shows that optimists have better health than pessimists in many different health aspects, which include taking better care of themselves, coping better with the adversity of illness, having faster rates of recovery from coronary bypass surgery, trying harder when challenged, living longer, having stronger immune functioning, having the initial onset of illness less likely, minimizing the severity of illness, increasing the survival rate following heart attacks, and finally increasing longevity (Piotrowski 2003; Aspinwall & Taylor 1997; Scheier, Magovern, Abbott, et al 1989; Peterson & Bossio 1991; Hafen, Karren, Frandsen, & Smith 1996; Shepperd, Maroto, Pbert 1996; Peterson & Seligman 1987; Peterson 2000). "Optimistic caner patients tend to live longer than more pessimistic ones and optimism is associated with greater immune system competence as indicated by the ratio of T4 to T8 cells (Peterson & Bossio 1991)." Even with something as little as the common cold, optimists are less susceptible to viral infections than pessimists, which make optimists less susceptible to the common cold (Peterson & Bossio 1991).

Research also shows that optimists have greater success in lowering levels of saturated fat, lowering body fat, and lowering an index of global coronary risk (Scheier et al 1989). Physical health is positively affected by optimism (Peterson 2000).

One study of HIV-negative, optimistic, gay men found that they had fewer anonymous partners than pessimists, suggesting that optimists make more effort to reduce risk of infection, thereby safe-guarding their health (Taylor et al 1992). Also, optimistic women who have a family history of alcoholism are less likely to have drinking problems than pessimistic women (Ohannessian, Hesselbrock, Tennen, & Affleck 1993).

"Individuals with a pessimistic explanatory style may *neglect the basics of health care in the first place*, because they see no connection between anything they might do and the onset or offset of illness (Becker 1974). Proper sleep, nutrition, and exercise are difficult enough for people to achieve even if they believe these behaviors to be healthy (Peterson & Seligman 1987)." The word "connection" that was just used is precisely where positive thinking comes in. A "connection" happens internally, in one's internal cognition, which is where one's purpose works from. There would be no need to contemplate, or lack there of in a pessimist's case, about there being purpose in life.

Research shows that staying healthy in the face of challenge involves maintaining a sense of optimism. A person must also stay committed to something meaningful and important, which is the purpose within one's internal cognition, in their life. Researchers deem that this may involve goals, which is an antecedent to positive thinking. A "zest for life" is also needed (Bandura 1997; Smelser & Baltes 2001, Vol. 16, p 11269), which optimists are often described as having. Seligman (2000) found that future-mindedness (goal setting), optimism, interpersonal skills (skills involving relationships), and faith are human strengths that buffer against mental illness, all of which are contained in the PTM.

(H7B: Positive thinking increases health.)

Chapter 5C: Performance

In the business world, optimistic people produce greater sales productivity (Seligman & Schulman 1986). Studies conducted on two insurance companies showed that optimistic sales people sold 35% more insurance than pessimistic sales people. Also, the study showed that pessimists were twice as likely to quite by the end of their first year than optimists (Seligman & Schulman 1986). In other research throughout various industries such as telecommunications, real estate, office products, auto sales, and banking showed that optimists outsold pessimists by 20 to 40% (Schulman 1995).

Management by objective (MBO) is also proven to lead to an increase in performance and overall business success (Kreitner & Kinicki 2004). Clear and achievable goals help management to implement and increase sales productivity and innovation within the company (Schulman 1999).

Through the use of motivation, research has proven to increase sales productivity (Schulman 1999). Motivation, which is an antecedent of positive thinking increases sales, as does optimism, which is the external form of positive thinking. So, in essence, positive thinking increases sales productivity.

In terms of business sales performance, satisfaction, absenteeism, and turn over (PSAT), optimism increases performance, increases satisfaction, decreases absenteeism, and increases turn over.

In another aspect of performance, athletic or performing arts activities, such as those in the Olympics or performances that occur on Broadway, benefit from optimism

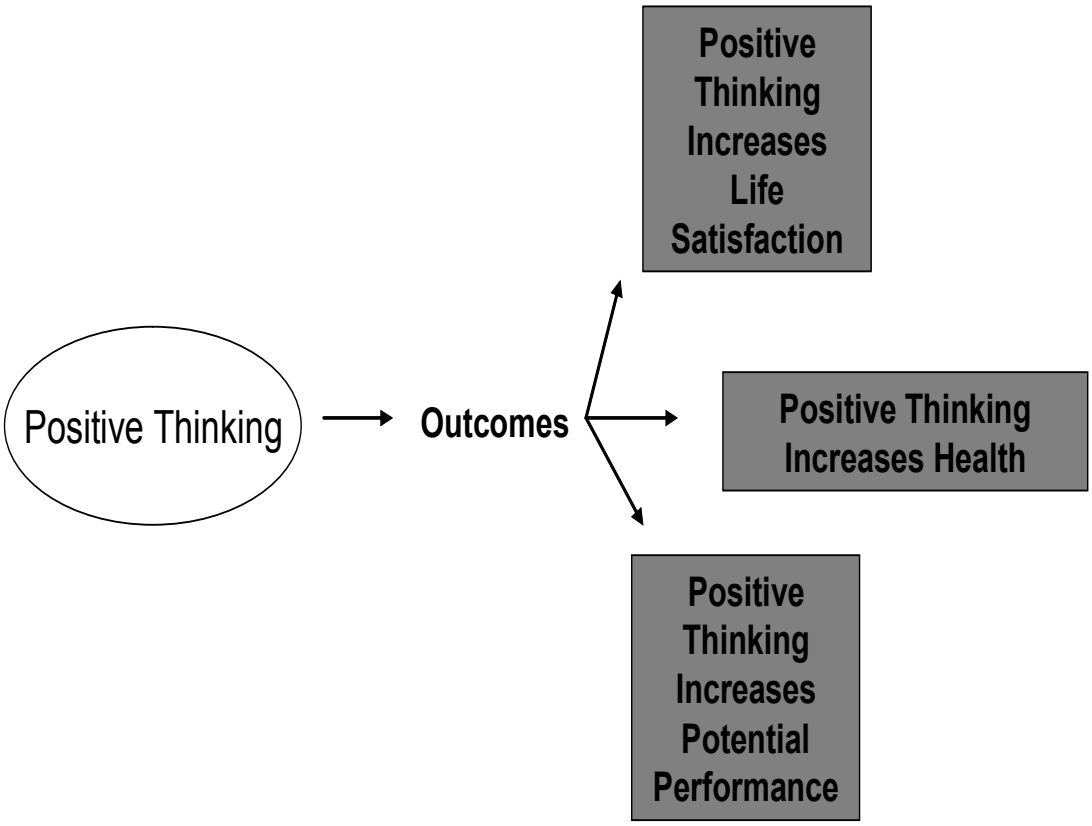
has proven to be affective as well. The concept of Flow, conceptualizing optimal moments, by Mihaly Csikskentmihalyi, is important in aspects of performance. Flow is describes as "a concept in which people are so engaged in a desire activity that nothing else seems to matter; it is a time of highly focused concentration resulting in the individual's complete absorption in his or her particular task. During these times of peak performance, people feel completely in control without exerting any particular effort (Piotrowski 2003)."

Clarity of goals and optimism play vital aspects of achieving optimal flow (Piotrowski 2003; Aspinwall & Brunhart 2000). "When their progress in impeded, people reassess their expectations of meeting their goals. If their expectations are favorable, people usually continue their goal-directed efforts. If their expectations are unfavorable, they are predicted to disengage from the goal (Aspinwall & Brunhart 2000)."

Whether the performance is in business, performing arts, or athletics, goal setting, motivation, and optimism have repeatedly positively affected the outcome of the performance. I am proposing that the combination of goal setting, motivation, positive thinking, and optimism help one to realize one's potential performance. Goal setting and motivation are the antecedents to positive thinking, and optimism is the external form of positive thinking. So, I am hypothesizing that positive thinking increases potential performance in business, performing arts, and athletic activities.

(H7C: Positive thinking increases potential performance.)

Figure 8: Outcomes of the PTM



Chapter 6: Implications and Applications

"The greatest discovery of my generation *is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind*." –William James

I've created a model of positive thinking and have attempted to prove how it works. Through the PTM, change can be implemented into the media, children, leadership, and affect the world positively.

Chapter 6A: The Media

There has been substantial research showing how positive thinking and optimism are extremely beneficial to one's life, which was shown through out this thesis. It is now time to take the research to the next step and mainstream it into the public and mass media.

Positive thinkers know they have a purpose and know that they must constantly surround themselves with positive, moral, optimistic, and upbeat aspects in their daily lives, so their internal and external environments match. What one mentally feeds one's mind deeply affects one's mental state, just like what one physically feeds one's stomach deeply affects one's physical state. I am suggesting that the current media output needs to be changed to encourage positive thinking and embrace optimism.

Currently, the main media outlets report on negative events, more so than positive events. "Negative emotions and experiences may be more urgent and therefore override positive ones. This would make evolutionary sense. Because negative emotions often reflect immediate problem or objective dangers, they should be powerful enough to force us to stop, increase vigilance, reflect on our behavior, and change our actions if necessary….Experiences that promote happiness often seem to pass effortlessly (Seligman 2001)." The mass media has a lot of power and control in the country because it controls a lot of what is mentally fed into the minds of Americans, and its current direction, mainly focusing on negative events, should be redirected. I feel that the mass media must change its output to promote optimism and positive thinking to its viewers.

The current large news networks use anger and fear in a large part of their news stories because they sell, but as research shows, it's bad for your health. Research shows

that positive emotions (e.g. the capacity to experience joy, interest, contentment, and love) transform people for the better by not only make people feel good in the present, but actually increasing the likelihood that people will feel good in the future (Fredrickson 2001).

Positive news has been on Earth forever. How is it that one of the most monetarily successful countries in history has the largest amount of individuals on prescription depressants in history? Wouldn't it make sense if our country was made up of the most positive individuals since we seem to be so happy because of the monetary and career accomplishments?

"Psychiatry now recognized some 14 "major" mental disorders, in addition to countless lesser maladies. Unipolar depression-unremitting blue feelings-has risen tenfold since World War II and now afflicts an estimated 18 million Americans. Increasingly, even children are prescribed psychotropic drugs, while frustrated drivers are described as not merely discourteous but enraged. In the past 100 years, academic journals have published 8,166 articles on "anger," compared with 416 on "forgiveness"; in its latest edition, the presumably encyclopedia of Human Emotions, a reference for clinicians, lists page after page of detrimental mental states but has no entry for "gratitude." (Easterbrook 2001)." Even if the main media outlets started showing one positive and encouraging news story, and one less negative event (e.g. murder, death, criminal trial), our country would be taking steps towards a more mentally healthy country. For example, reporting on the War on Terrorism, the news should report on one more story of how the U.S. troops are helping to build churches and school and helping to instill more freedom for the women and children overseas, and one less negative news story on another car bombing overseas. Instilling more negativity in the minds of citizens will not encourage positive thinking or happier mental state.

What do you look for? Do you look for the positive or do you look for the negative? Everyone has selective hearing and seeing. You hear and see what you want to hear and see. "A man is what he thinks about all day long," reads a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Here is a small vignette to show my point.

* * *

A man who lived in New York City, obviously a city man, had an old college friend of his visiting from the country. The man who lived in New York City worked as a stockbroker down on Wall Street and chose to move to the city after college. His friend, who chose to move back to the country after college started a large farm animal feed company.

The city man brought his country friend to Times Square one afternoon, during his weekend visit. As they were walking through the huge crowds of people in the streets and the vendors on the sidewalks, the countryman stopped and perked up his ear. The city man said, "What do you hear?"

The countryman said, "I hear a cricket."

The city man said, "First off, how the heck do you think a cricket could live in the middle of all the lights and people and hustle and bustle of Times Square. Secondly, if there actually is a cricket here, how on Earth can you hear it?"

The countryman grabbed his old college friend's hand and ran across the street, though all the honking taxis, to one of the middle concrete island in Times Square. He went over to one of the huge potted trees in a concrete three-foot diameter pots. The countryman pushed away some of the rubbish on the top of the soil, and low and behold, there was a cricket chirping away. The city man was amazed and said, "How the heck did you hear that cricket?"

The countryman took some coins out of his pocket and dropped them to the ground. At the sound of the "clink, clink, clink" of the coins hitting the ground, everyman with in a five foot radius of where the man was standing whipped their heads around at the sound of money hitting the ground.

* * *

Every person has selective hearing and sight. Positive news has been around forever, it just depends on if you chose to listen and look for it.

Chapter 6B: Children

A stated in the previous section on the media, children are increasingly being prescribed psychotropic drugs (Easterbrook 2001), and to me, that is an extremely scary

concept. Because doctors are willing to prescribe drugs for children with "mental disorders" at a higher rate than ever before, that means that either parents have tried other non-prescriptive drug methods to instill more joy in the lives of children and those haven't worked, or the parents haven't tried any other remedies and are looking for a quick medical fix. Neither one of those scenarios are healthy, and if our young generations are taught that medicine will make them happy, I am sad to say that the outlook of our future generations doesn't look so positive.

"High rates of boredom, alienation, and disconnection from meaningful challenges are not signs of psychopathology, at least not in most cases, but rather signs of a deficiency in positive development…Many youth do their schoolwork, comply with their parents, hang out with their friends, and get through the day, but are not invested in paths into the future that excite them or feel like they originate from within (Larson 2000)." This is where positive thinking becomes extremely vital in the lives of youths. The "invested paths" that are "originated from within" is where youths start to find out about their purposes in life. This vital point in youths' lives is where mentors and leadership come into play.

"A central question of youth development is how to get adolescents' fires lit, how to have them develop the complex of dispositions and skills needed to take charge of their lives (Larson 2000)." Youth must be lead by example. They don't believe it until they see it. One can tell youth to attend church, spend more time with family, and set goals to achieve more in life, but unless the one telling the youth practices what is being preached, the youth won't move from their current path. "One way that initiative might be instigated would be if adolescents were "pulled" by appealing images of adulthood. They might then be motivated to set themselves on a course of action aimed at reaching adult goals (Larson 2000)."

Bandura (1977) proposed the social learning theory where the "central argument is that a person's self-efficacy is largely determined by the extent to which individuals believe they have succeeded in previous performances in a given area. To build self-efficacy, a coach must perform four tasks in the course of coaching: 1. Identify and define clear parameters of success. 2. Build and structure situations that have potential for success. 3. Identify factors that lead to success. 4. Identify inner sources of success

(Popper & Lipshitz 1992).” A child’s ohana, which could include mentors, can help bring up children in society using positive thinking and the parameters set up by the social learning theory. The four tasks that must be performed by coaches, according to Bandura (1977), are intertwined throughout the antecedents to positive thinking, which are motivation and goal and setting, and through positive thinking itself.

“During youth activities, adolescents experience a unique combination of intrinsic motivation and concentration that is rarely presented during their daily experiences in schoolwork and unstructured leisure…children and adolescents come alive in the activities, they become active agents in ways that rarely happen in other parts of their lives (Larson 2000).”

Positive thinking and optimism are not things usually on an adolescents’ mind. Mentors, teachers, and ohana can all lead change in youth by first, practicing positive thinking and being optimists, and then guiding youth to follow the path they have already laid. Youth secretly crave for mentors, teachers, and ohana to care about their future and to help lay paths for their future. Leaders can teach youth the importance of going to church by attending church with the youth, spending time with one’s ohana by physically spending time together, and being intrinsically invested in activities that spark the fire of life in youth by being involved in that activity with the youth.

Chapter 6C: Leadership

Leadership can happen in almost every aspect of life, including the academic and professional world, by using positive thinking. Within an organization, leaders (e.g. CEOs, managers) can either 1. Increase positive thinking within oneself, and/or 2. Increase positive thinking within their followers of the organization. I believe one must practice what one preaches, so one cannot preach positive thinking without practicing it first. A leader cannot and should not preach positive thinking to its followers without practicing positive thinking.

Recommendations for Leaders

- Encourage employees to find purpose within the organization
- Allow and encourage employees to show spirituality/faith at work
- Promote an open "ohana" feeling at work by having an "open door" policy
- Show interest in employees' ohanas
- Make organizational goals and visually post them for all employees to see
- Be an optimist and greet every person at work with a smile
- Always remember that you have three choices: you can chose to be positive, you can chose to be negative, or you can chose not to chose and let others chose for you

Leadership can happen in education as well by teachers, professors, and mentors encouraging students to find deeper meanings in lessons, which encourages students to contemplate and take action on their purpose in life. Positive thinking and optimism are not things that are just for the academic section of life, but are meant to be spread into all aspects of life.

The Leaders of Heath have shown that mentorship and leadership for youth can also happen within the business world also. "Leaders of Heath and colleagues' successful organizations tenaciously insisted that youths hold responsibility for major decisions of the organization, even when those decisions threatened the existence of the organization. But at the same time, these leaders played a role in defining the situation and modeling the language of agency. They laid out problems in the form of "what if" and "if then" contingencies. They prompted participants to think through alternative scenarios and hypothetical situations, prosing open-ended dilemmas that required reflection, analysis, and drawing on past experiences (Larson 2000)." Mentoring and leading youth can happen in any and all sectors of life.

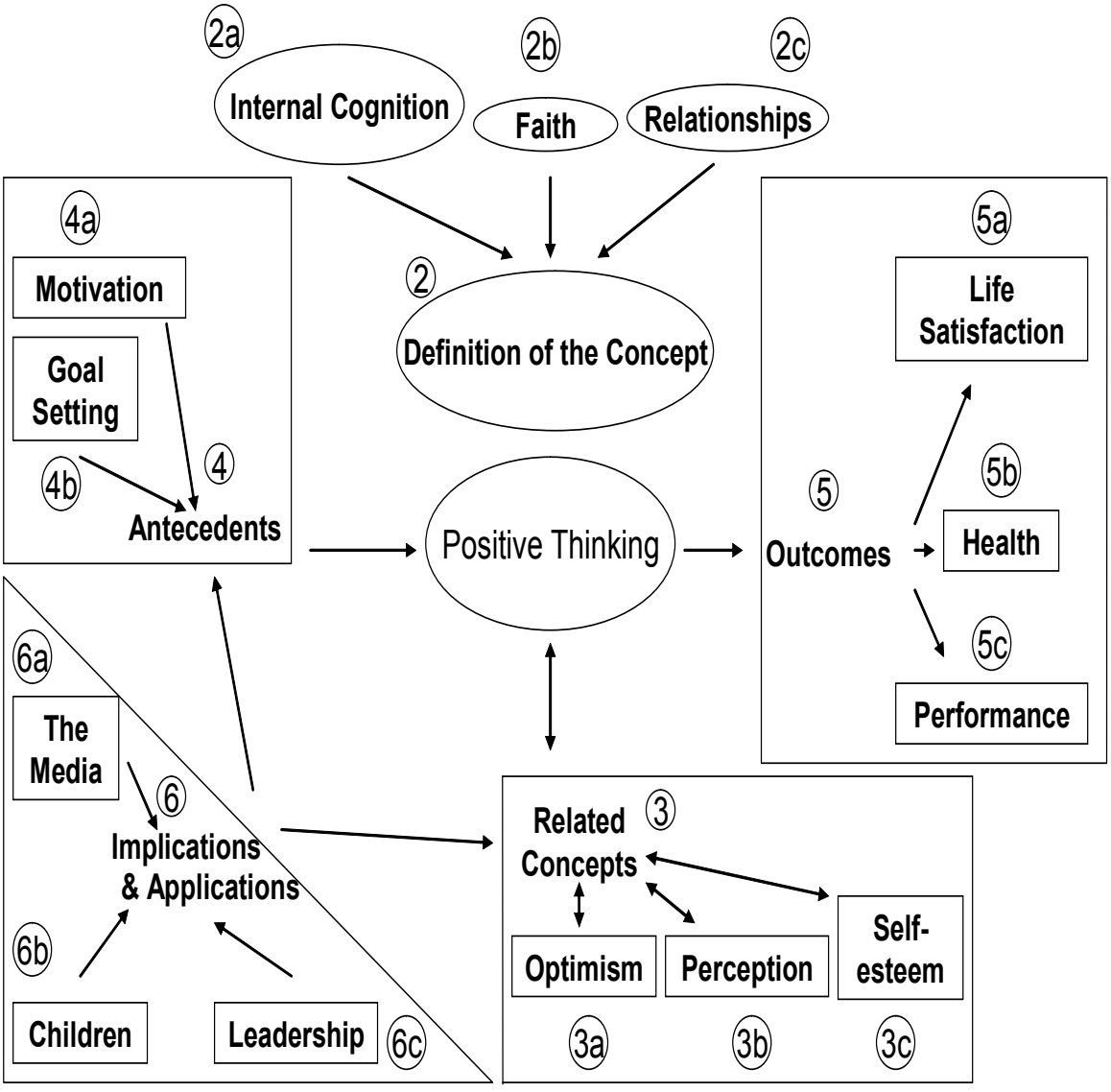
Summary

Working through the PTM, the implications and applications, stated in chapter six, activate the model. The change in media, mentorship of children, and leadership work through the antecedents to positive thinking, motivation and goal setting, and

through the related concepts to positive thinking, optimism, perception, and self-esteem. The antecedents and related concepts pass through positive thinking and end up at the outcomes to positive thinking, which are an increase in life satisfaction, health, and performance. When the implications and applications are applied correctly, they will pass through all the aspects of the PTM and lead to an increase in life satisfaction, health, and performance.

I have included much research in my thesis on positive thinking. It is one thing to do research, but another thing to act on the research. Positive thinking and optimism, I truly believe, will be a vital pivotal point for teens to instill a purpose, or lack there of, in their lives. There are many different concepts covered in my thesis attempting to prove the PTM, and if *one* person instilled just *one* of the many concepts into *one* youth, the world would be a better place. That *one* concept instilled in the youth would start to light the vital fire of life and purpose from within, which would only begin to ignite more of a burning fire to fall in love with life. Children are the future of the world. All it takes is *one* mentor to instill *one* bit of fire within *one* youth.

Figure 9: The PTM



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