



Feeling Good and Doing Good

An introduction to positive psychology
and its application to positive education

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Government of
South Australia

SA – State of Wellbeing



Big Impact



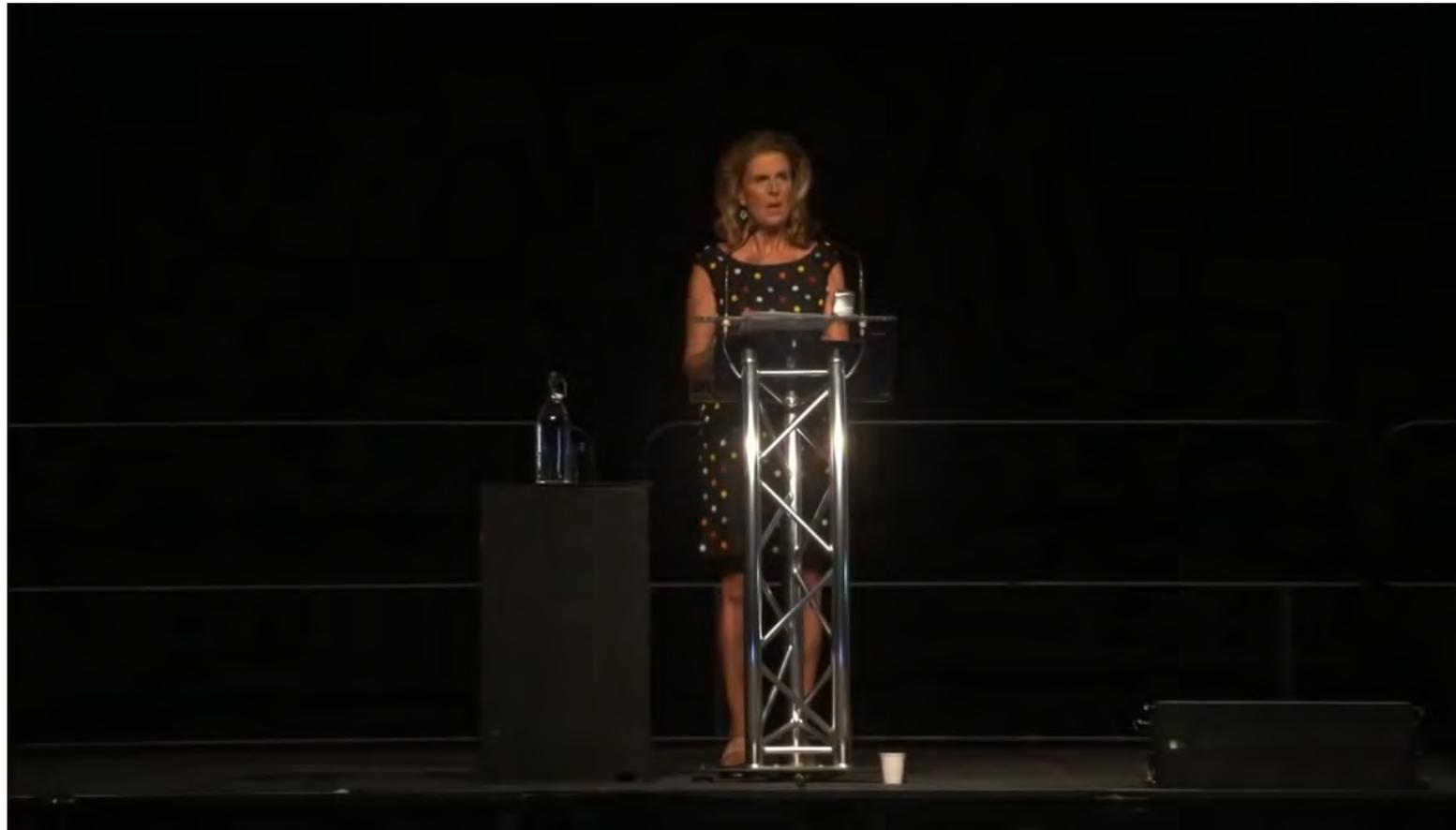
- **238,092 minutes**
- **65,000 viewers**



- **39,500 accounts**
reached during Martin
Seligman final lecture

14,000 people attended public events

SA – State of Wellbeing



Positive Psychology

- “Positive Psychology is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work and play” Martin Seligman
 - “Positive Psychology is an umbrella term for work that investigates happiness, wellbeing, human strengths and flourishing” Shelley Gable and Jonathan Haidt
 - “Positive Psychology is not a spectator sport” Christopher Peterson
 - Learn it, live it, teach it, embed it Geelong Grammar
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Mental health data

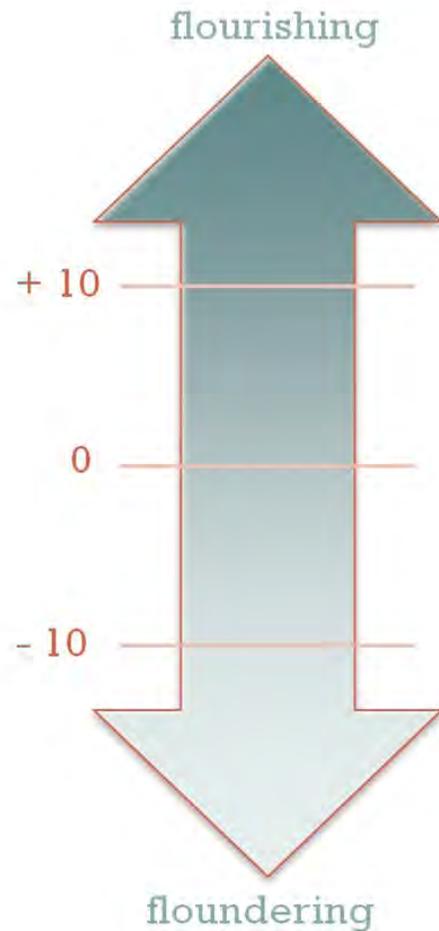
- 1 in 4 young people experience mental health problems during adolescence Sawyer, et al 2001
 - 1 in 5 adults experience mental illness in any year ABS 2009
 - Suicide is the largest single cause of death in young Australian males aged 15-24 years (22%) ABS 2013
 - 75% of all mental health conditions start before the age of 25 Kessler et al 2007
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Flourishing

The presence of wellbeing is
MORE THAN
the absence of illness



What is wrong with you? & What is right with you?



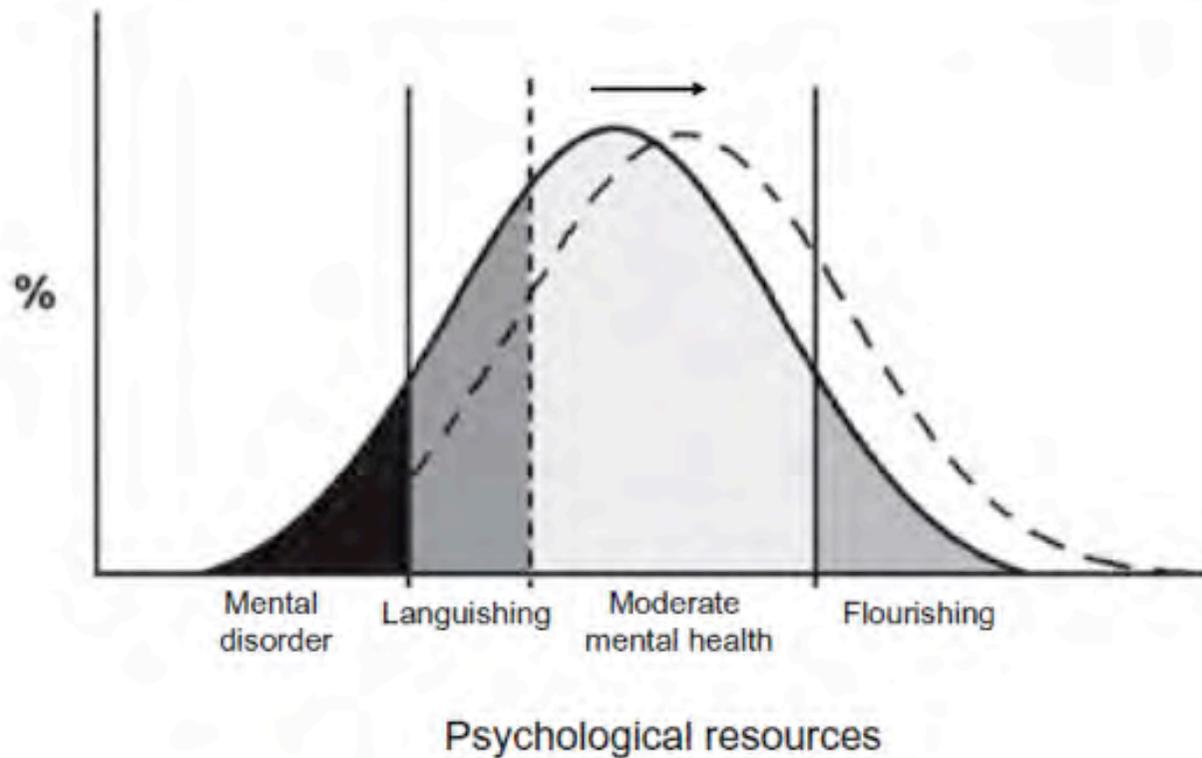
How do we go beyond 0
(e.g. from +3 to +8)?

What is above the line is
as important to study and
be aware of, as what is
below the line.

So much deficit-based
psychology focused on
getting people back to 0.
There is a range of
experience above and
below neutral.

Inoculate the population

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF WELL-BEING



PERMA Dashboard

Positive emotion
Engagement
Relationships
Meaning
Accomplishment



Strengths of Character – Virtues
Each is Measurable and each is Teachable

PERMA Plus Dashboard

Positive emotion
Engagement
Relationships
Meaning
Accomplishment



Plus

Sleep, Nutrition, Physical Fitness, Optimism

Strengths of Character – Virtues

Some Seligman snippets

- "As our ability to measure positive emotion, engagement, meaning, accomplishment, and positive relations improves we can ask with rigor how many people in a nation, in a city, or in a corporation are flourishing. We ask with rigor when in her lifetime an individual is flourishing. We ask with rigor if a charity is increasing the flourishing of its beneficiaries. We can ask with rigor if our school systems are helping our children flourish." (Martin Seligman, Flourish, 2011)
-

Seligman again

- Psychology and medicine get turned on their heads when we ask about the opposite of pathology: about the strengthening effects of benevolent events. Indeed, any endeavour - nutrition, the immune system, welfare, politics, education, or ethics - that is fixated on the remedial misses this insight and does just half the job: correcting deficits while failing to build strength." (Martin Seligman, Flourish, 2011)
-

Pause for breath....

‘We can have the experience, but miss the meaning...’ (attributed to someone famous)

In what has been presented so far...

- What struck you?
 - What surprised you?
 - What is the key point you have taken from the presentation so far?

 - The idea I most take issue with in the presentation is..

 - One question I would like to ask the presenter is...
-

Positive Psychology (+P)

- Positive Psychology is not just



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Positive Emotions

Gratitude

Inspiration

Hope

Joy

Interest

Love

Pride

Awe

Serenity

Amusement

Fredrickson, 2009

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Why Positive Emotion?

- The negativity bias
 - Broaden and Build theory
 - Positive emotions broaden our thinking and attention
 - Build our psychological resources and resilience
 - Undo negative emotions and trigger upward spirals Barbara Fredrickson 2001
 - The balance between positive and negative emotion is critical to wellbeing
 - Gratitude – hunt the good stuff
-

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Positive Engagement

Time stood still...”

“I was at one with the music”

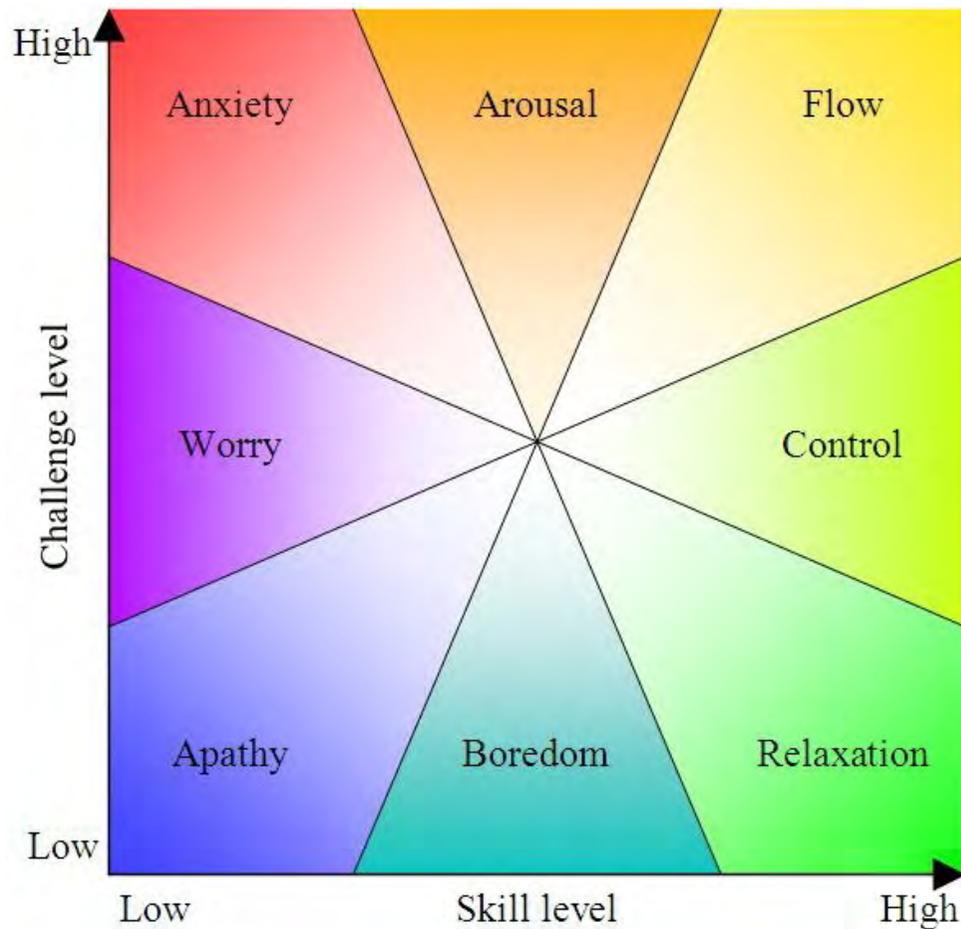
“...so absorbed, nothing else seemed to matter”

- **Ingredients for flow**
 - Completely focused motivation
 - Balance between the challenge of the task and the skill of the individual.
 - **Possible benefits**
 - Positive emotion
 - Rejuvenation
 - Improved performance
 - Further learning & skill development
-

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Positive Engagement

- 8 States of engagement



Flow

- Goldilocks task
 - Not too hard
 - Not too easy
 - JUST RIGHT

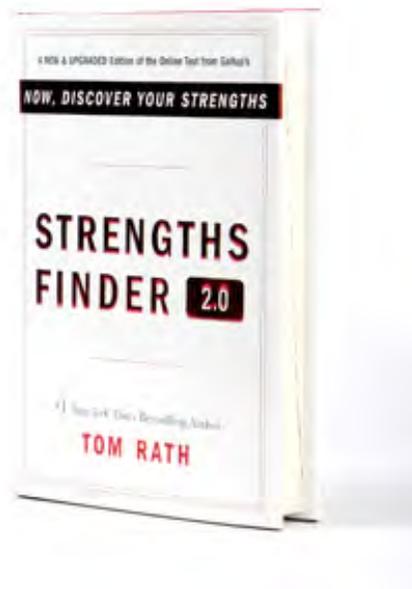


- Using character strengths more is one of the best ways to increase engagement

Positive Engagement

- Flow is the optimal state of engagement
 - Performing at your best while enjoying yourself the most
 - You can experience solitary flow and social flow
 - Challenge/skill balance
 - Using your character strengths more is one of the best ways to increase engagement
-

Strengths Assessments



<http://www.viacharacter.org>



Virtues

Transcendence

Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning

Temperance

Strengths that protect against excess

Wisdom and Knowledge

Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge

Courage

Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal

Humanity

Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others

Justice

Civic Strengths that underlie healthy community life

VIA Character Strengths and Virtues

<http://www.viacharacter.org>



Wisdom & Knowledge	Courage	Humanity	Justice	Temperance	Transcendence
Creativity	Bravery	Love	Teamwork	Forgiveness	Appreciation of beauty & excellence
Curiosity	Perseverance	Kindness	Fairness	Humility	Gratitude
Judgment	Honesty	Social intelligence	Leadership	Prudence	Hope
Love of Learning	Zest			Self-regulation	Humour
Perspective					Spirituality

Character Strengths

Using your signature strengths typically:

- Builds positive emotion.
 - Feels energising and satisfying.
 - Fosters a sense of ownership and authenticity, as well as greater vitality and self-esteem.
 - Increases the rate of learning something new.
 - Increases happiness and decreases depression (at home and at work).
- **How can you find ways to incorporate your signature strengths more in what you do?**
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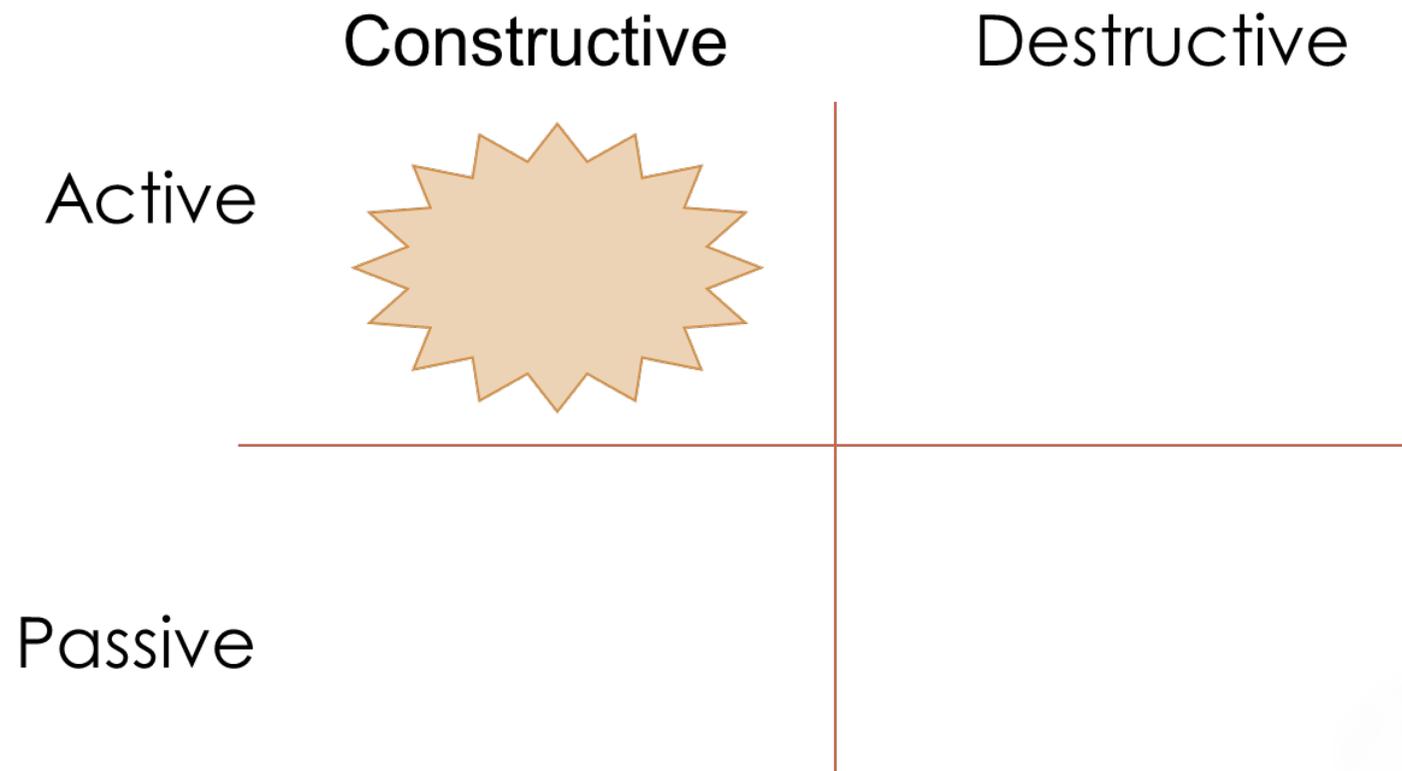
Martin Seligman and Character Strengths



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Positive Relationships

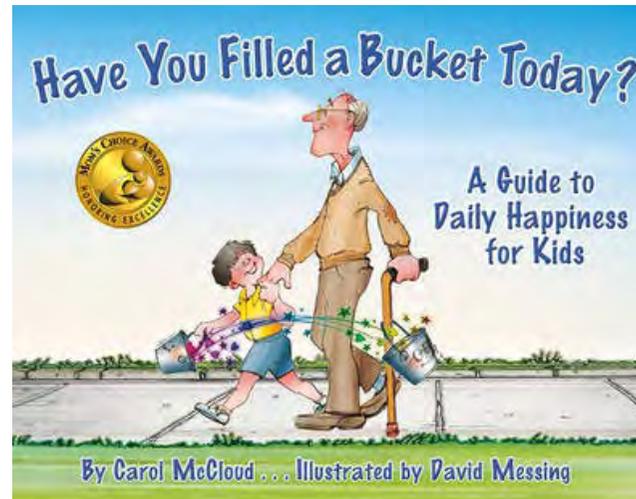
Active-Constructive Responding to Good News



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Positive Relationships

- Other people matter
 - Increase resilience
 - Increase feelings of autonomy, competence & relatedness (self-determination)
 - Buffer against depression
 - One of the strongest indicators of your satisfaction with life



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Positive Meaning

- People who can identify a source of meaning in their lives report;
 - Greater happiness and life satisfaction
 - Physically and emotionally healthier
 - More resilience
 - Greater sense of control over their lives

	Hedonic Activities <i>Leisure, rest, fun, enjoyment</i>	Eudaimonic Activities <i>Learning, helping someone</i>
Short Term	Pleasant feelings, less negative emotions, more energy	
Sustainable		Greater life satisfaction

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Meaning and Purpose

- Who are you?
 - Who are you to others?
 - What do you give to others?
 - What are your core values?

 - Cultivating Altruism
 - Random Acts of Kindness
 - Considering priorities
 - Time machine – 110 year old self
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Positive Accomplishment

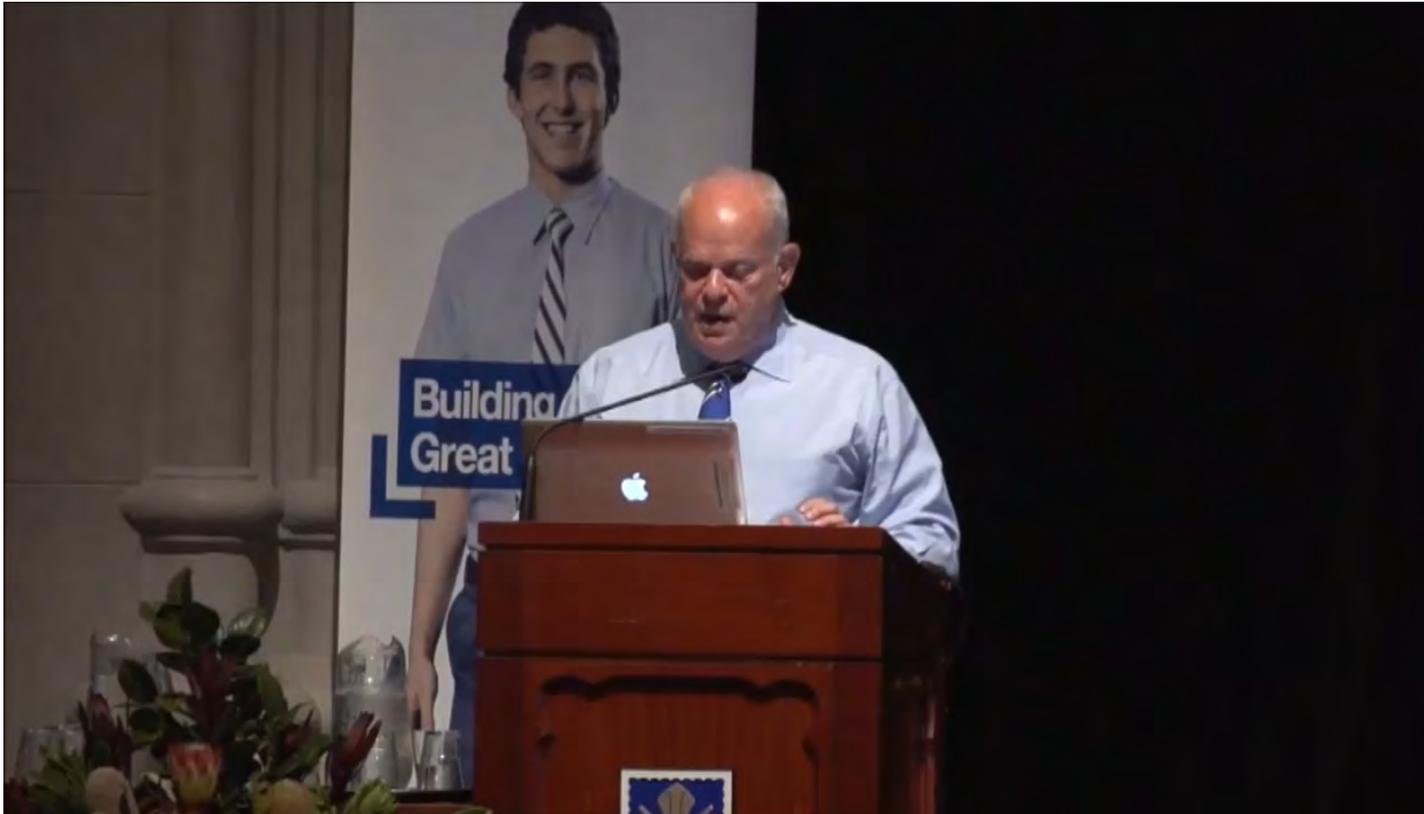
- **Fixed Mindsets**
 - You believe your talents and abilities are set.
 - You must prove yourself over and over, trying to look smart and talented at all times
 - **Growth Mindsets**
 - You know that talents can be developed and that great abilities are built over time.
 - You believe your qualities can be cultivated through your efforts
- Carol Dweck 2006
- **Self Esteem vs Self Worth**
-

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Positive Accomplishment

- One pathway is GRIT
 - Angela Duckworth PhD studies show grit is essential to high achievement
 - Roughly twice as important as IQ in academic success
 - GRIT = passion and perseverance for long-term goals (stick-to-it-ness)
-

Martin Seligman – Great teachers



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Keep the Balance

