

## The 3 Pillars of Positive Psychology

By Kevin Obermuller

Martin Seligman, author of globally best selling books ‘**Learned Optimism**’ & ‘**Authentic Happiness**’, is researching the effects of *positive psychology* on the lives and experiences of individuals, organisations and communities. His construct is that there are three pillars of *positive psychology*.

### Pillar One:

The first pillar of *positive psychology* encompasses what Seligman declares as *positive subjective experience* which is further divided into three parts: Past, Present, and Future. The Past is focused on experiences of well-being, contentment, and satisfaction. The Present refers to experiences of happiness, ecstasy, and the sensual pleasures. And the Future includes the experiences of optimism and hope.

### Pillar Two:

The second pillar of *positive psychology* is positive individual traits or the traits of a character that enable one to have a “good life,” that allows the free engagement of characteristics including; intimacy, vocation, wisdom, integrity, aesthetic sense, spirituality, future mindedness. There are in fact seventeen of these traits!

### Pillar Three:

The third pillar involves the creation and functioning of positive institutions, the kinds of communities, organisations, families, schools, and nations that bring out the best in positive character and bring out the positive subjective experience. It is the third pillar that we as leaders and managers of others tend to wish to strengthen and develop within the organisations of people to whom we are accountable.

In creating and strengthening this third pillar, the process of “Appreciative Enquiry” is beneficial benefit to operational leaders and managers and to the “change champions” they often sponsor to assist them in getting things done.