

Prof. Jeanne Nakamura

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Bio

Jeanne Nakamura is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Quality of Life Research Center at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California (United States). She received her PhD from the University of Chicago's Committee on Human Development. She helped establish Claremont's Quality of Life Research Center with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1999 and the university's positive psychology graduate program, which offered the first doctoral degree focusing on positive psychology, in 2007. She studies positive psychology in a lifespan-developmental context, with a focus on adult development and aging. Her research interests include flow and vital engagement, good work and good mentoring, and how these relate to individual and collective well-being. In her work on aging well, she has focused on prosocial commitment as a model for positive aging. Among her works on these and related topics, Jeanne is coauthor of Good Mentoring and co-editor of Positive Psychological Science. She is a member of IPPA's Council of Advisors, and has helped organize convenings on Alternatives to Materialism and the Psychology of Well-being and Its Ecological Implications.

Keynote address on:

The Limits of Attention, Flow, and Commitments Beyond the Self

Abstract

As past scholarship has made clear, at any given moment and also over the course of a lifetime we have only finite attention but we face endless claims upon it. Individual and collective well-being thus depend to a significant degree on how this limited attention is invested. Devoting focused and full attention to what one is doing in the present moment is one way of investing attention. Another way is directing attention to outcomes that lie beyond the present moment – outcomes that include the future welfare of others. In this presentation, I discuss how the investment of attention shapes people’s experiences of flow (deep and enjoyable absorption) and their experiences of prosocial commitment (dedication to the well-being of others), how the two can be in tension, and how they can be in harmony. In addition, I discuss implications for the understanding of attention and its relationship to the quality of life, individual and collective.