

Prof. Nansook Park, Ph.D., NCSP
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Bio

Nansook Park is a professor of psychology, director of the Michigan Positive Psychology Center at the University of Michigan, and a nationally certified school psychologist (NCSP). She did her graduate work both in South Korea and USA in the field of clinical and school psychology. Her main research focuses around a psychology of human strengths and the promotion of positive development and well-being across the life-span in different culture settings. Her research spans many topics in positive psychology including character strengths, moral virtues, resiliency, optimism, life meaning and purpose, prosociality, school kindness, positive relationships, and strength-based practice, and their role in health, family, work, and education across cultures. Her work in collaboration with the late Christopher Peterson in developing ways to measure character strengths and virtues and studying their development, consequences and ways to cultivate good character is considered one of the most ambitious undertaking within the field of positive psychology. Her work has had impacts on research and practices in various settings including education, healthcare, business, and military. She played a major role for the Positive Education project in Australia, Positive Youth Development project with Annenberg Foundation, Positive Health project with Robertwood Johnson Foundation, and Soldier Psychological Fitness, Resilience, and Growth Project with US Army. She served as a core member of scholars for the Science and Ethics for Happiness and Well-being (SEH) initiative led by the Vatican City and UN-Sustainable Development (2019-2022). She was named in the Stanford/Elsevier List of World's Top 2 % Scientists in 2023. She has

received several honors including the 2015 Christopher Peterson Gold Medal Award (International Positive Psychology Association(IPPA)'s highest honor), the Fellow Awards (International Positive Psychology Association & Association for Psychological Science), a Distinguished Visiting Professorship at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, the Academic Excellence Award (Ministry of Education & Beijing Institute of Education, China), and a Templeton Research Fellow at the Positive Psychology Center of the University of Pennsylvania. She was the inaugural recipient of J. Frank Yates Award for Excellence in Seminar-based Teaching at the University of Michigan-Dept of Psychology. She is a member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) council of advisors and a Consulting Editor for The Journal of Positive Psychology.

Keynote address on:

How to Build and Sustain a Good Life in the Relational Context:

Lessons from Positive Psychology

Abstract

Building and maintaining a good life is a universal aspiration, both for individuals and societies. It encompasses aspects such as happiness, health, engagement, meaningful relationships, moral character, and a sense of purpose, extending beyond mere absence of problems. While traditional approaches often center on problem identification and reduction, a new paradigm is needed—one that expands existing methods. Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of human well-being. Embracing a strength-based approach, positive psychology acknowledges that problems coexist with strengths and assets. In this lecture, we explore key research findings from positive psychology and effective strategies to cultivate and nurture a morally good life. Central to this discussion is the recognition that a good life cannot solely be achieved through individual endeavors; rather, it thrives within the social fabric of relationships. As social beings, humans find meaning, support, and fulfillment through connections with others. Thus, the most potent pathways to building and sustaining a good life are inherently social, emphasizing the importance of mutual support and collaboration.