

# A Break from Burnout:

## *A Positive Psychology Approach*

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# About Me:

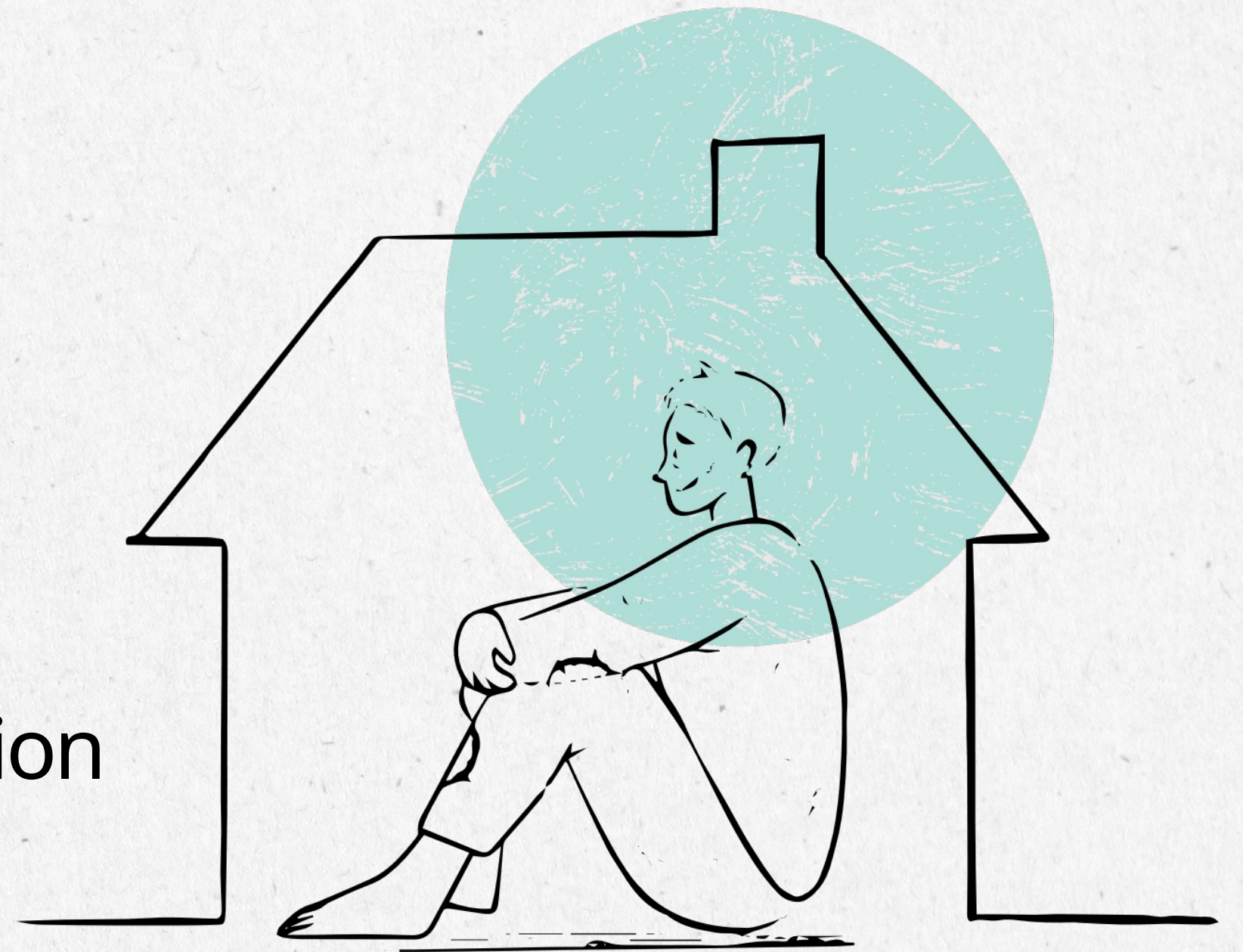
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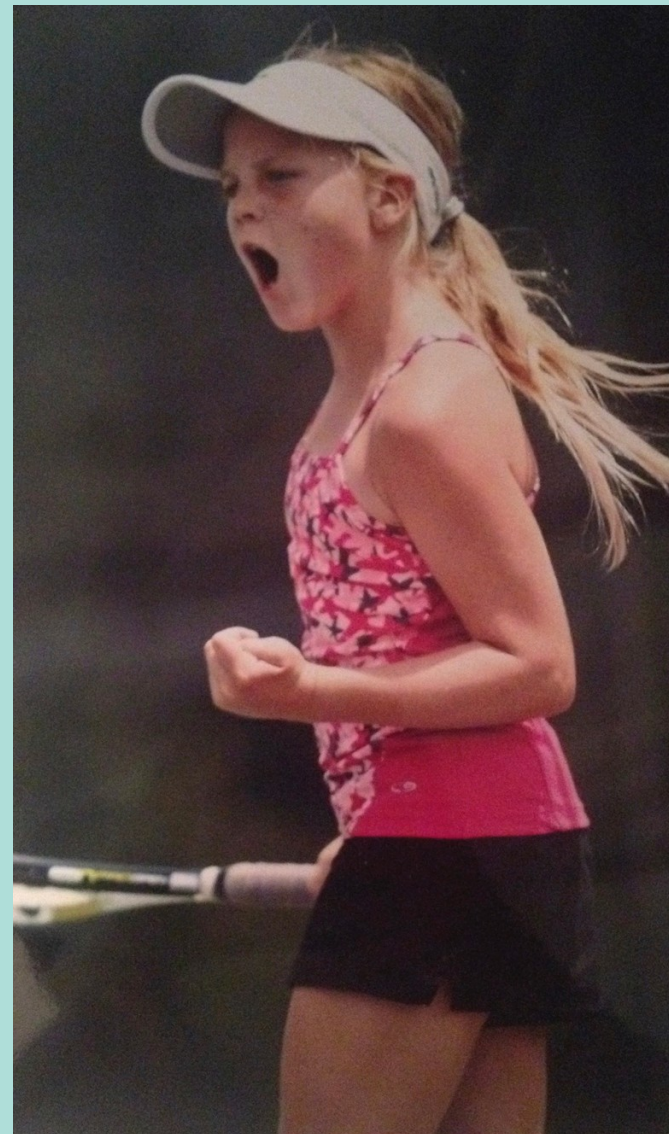
# Agenda:

- Personal Relevance
- Basics of Burnout & Positive Psychology
- Group Activity
- Discussion & Practical Application
- Q&A





# Personal Relevance





## Values in action

Honesty

Humor

Perseverance

Kindness

Spirituality

W TH F S Sn

x

x

x

x

x



# What's Burnout?

- A psychological syndrome of **exhaustion**, **cynicism**, and **inefficacy**, which is experienced in response to chronic job stressors.
- Response to prolonged and chronic **emotional** and **interpersonal stressors** while on the job
- Impairs both **personal** and **social** functioning
- Organizational context is one of the prime predictors of burnout

(Maslach & Leiter,  
2007)

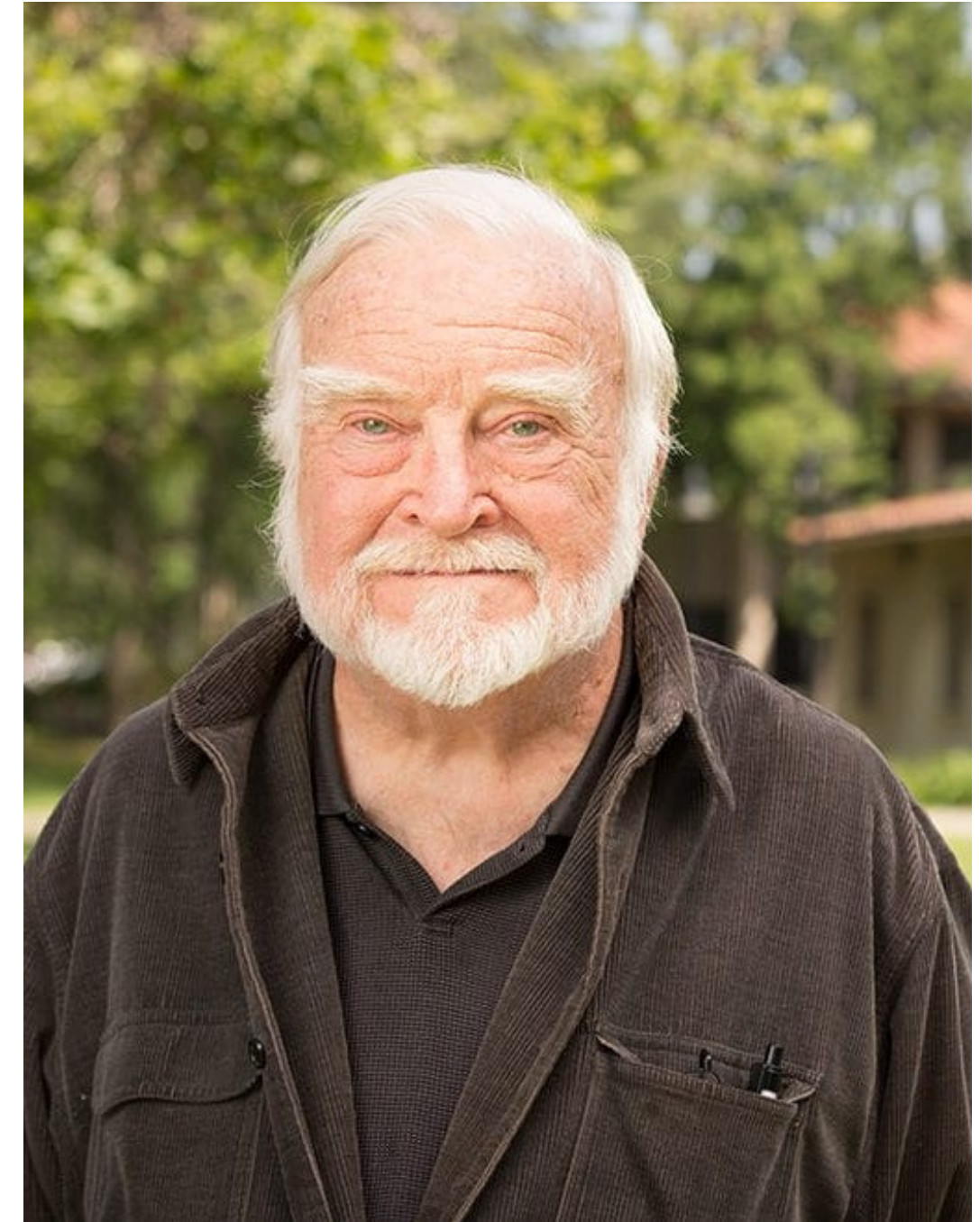
**Positive Psychology helps answer  
the question of how we can  
combat burnout when we cannot  
change the environment we are a  
part of.**



# Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi

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- Credited with formally introducing positive psychology in 2000
- Felt that focus on pathology left little room to foster flourishing
- Readjusting the focus from repairing the worst things to also building positive qualities





# What Positive Psychology is Not

- Positive psychology does not involve ignoring and denying the existence of suffering and distress (**Gable & Haidt, 2005**)
- Positive Psychology does not ignore, invalidate, or disregard medical or pathological models of psychology
- Positive Psychology is not about “being happy” but rather pursuing well-being and flourishing amidst distress
- Positive Psychology is not just “having a positive attitude”





# What is Positive Psychology?

- Exploration of an individual's strengths and virtue (**Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000**).
- The pursuit of one's overall well-being, learning to discover joy, and increasing fulfillment and contentment in one's life
- Through fostering positive emotions and building character that a foundation to begin working to alleviate suffering is created (**Duckworth et al., 2005**).
- Investigate the entirety of the human experience, acknowledging the existence of the negative while simultaneously promoting the positive.

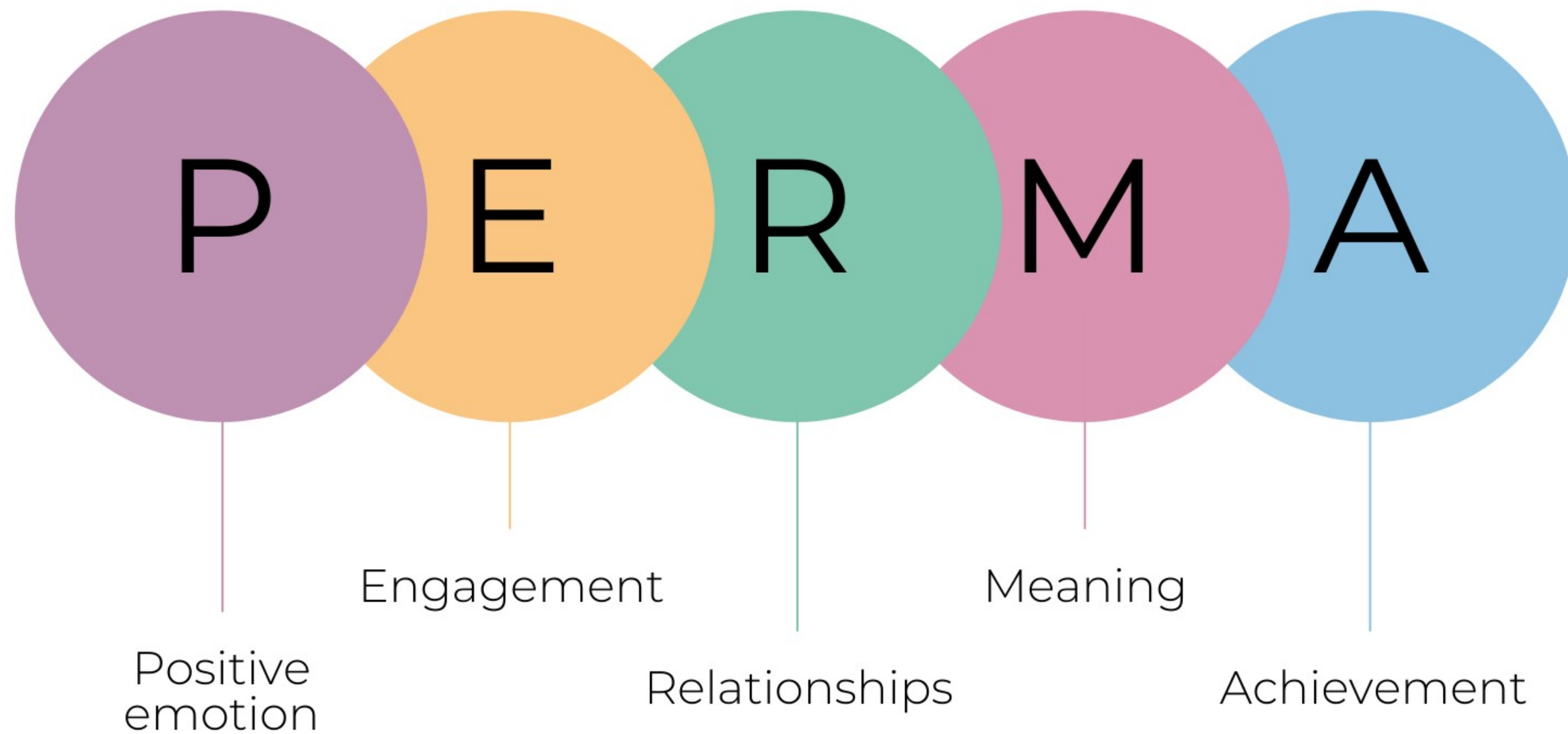




**How do we use Positive  
Psychology to pursue  
well- being?**



# Seligman's PERMA Theory of Well-Being





**Engagement is believed to  
be the opposite of  
burnout, but is it the most  
effective option to  
combating burnout?**





# Values-in-Action

Peterson and Seligman (2004) created the Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification to highlight and classify strengths and values that contribute to fulfillment and psychological well-being.

Studies have found participants who performed identifying signature strengths and using signature strengths in new ways within the work context achieved higher levels of well-being.

Experiencing harmonious passion: when we feel we are able to express who we are and what's most important to us through what we do



“Using signature strengths in a new way”



**Positive Psychology  
interventions tailored to  
fostering meaning and  
accomplishment can help  
combat burnout when  
burnout is already present.**



## WISDOM

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### **Creativity**

Originality; adaptive; ingenuity

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### **Curiosity**

Interest; novelty-seeking; exploration; openness to experience

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### **Judgment**

Critical thinking; thinking things through; open-minded

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### **Love of Learning**

Mastering new skills & topics; systematically adding to knowledge

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### **Perspective**

Wisdom; providing wise counsel; taking the big picture view

## COURAGE

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### **Bravery**

Valor; not shrinking from fear; speaking up for what's right

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### **Perseverance**

Persistence; industry; finishing what one starts

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### **Honesty**

Authenticity; integrity

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### **Zest**

Vitality; enthusiasm; vigor; energy; feeling alive and activated

## HUMANITY

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### **Love**

Both loving and being loved; valuing close relations with others

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### **Kindness**

Generosity; nurturance; care; compassion; altruism; "niceness"

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### **Social Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence; aware of the motives/feelings of self/others; knowing what makes other people tick

## JUSTICE

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### **Teamwork**

Citizenship; social responsibility; loyalty

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### **Fairness**

Just; not letting feelings bias decisions about others

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### **Leadership**

Organizing group activities; encouraging a group to get things done

## TEMPERANCE

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### **Forgiveness**

Mercy; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance

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### **Humility**

Modesty; letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves

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### **Prudence**

Careful; cautious; not taking undue risks

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### **Self-Regulation**

Self-control; disciplined; managing impulses & emotions

## TRANSCENDENCE

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### **Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence**

Awe; wonder; elevation

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### **Gratitude**

Thankful for the good; expressing thanks; feeling blessed

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### **Hope**

Optimism; future-mindedness; future orientation

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### **Humor**

Playfulness; bringing smiles to others; lighthearted

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### **Spirituality**

Religiousness; faith; purpose; meaning



{where the world finds strength}

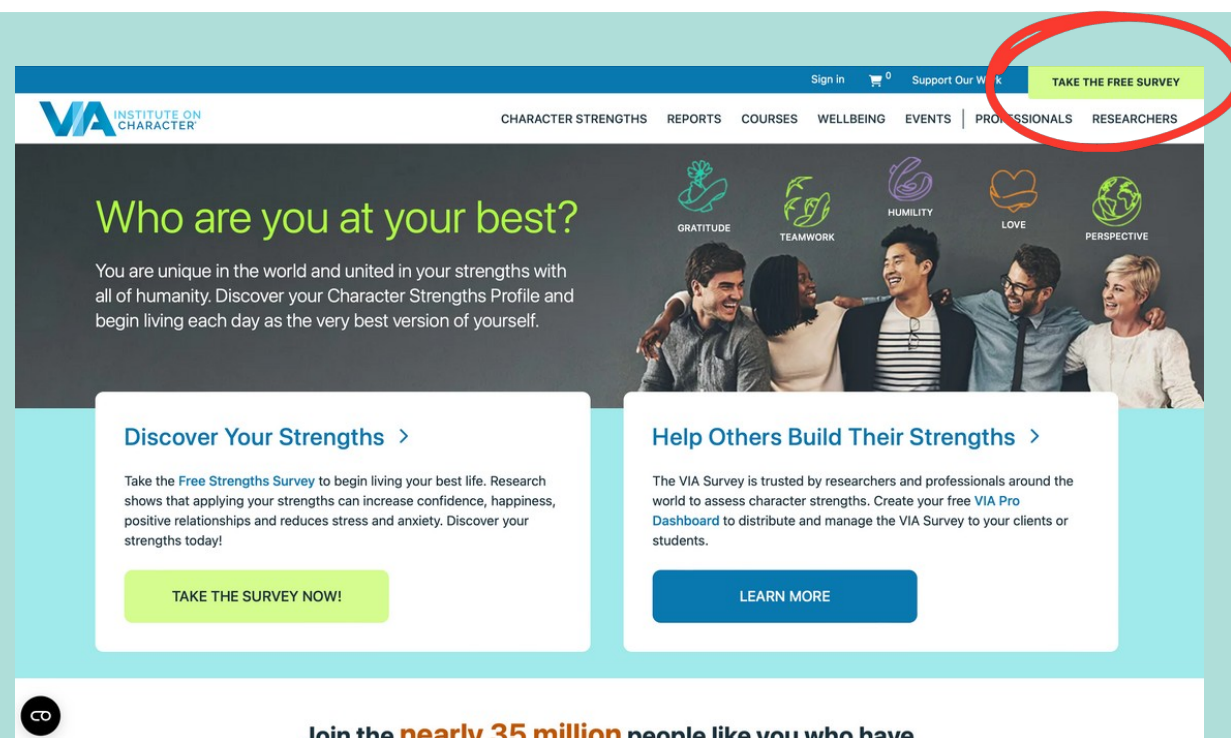
[www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)



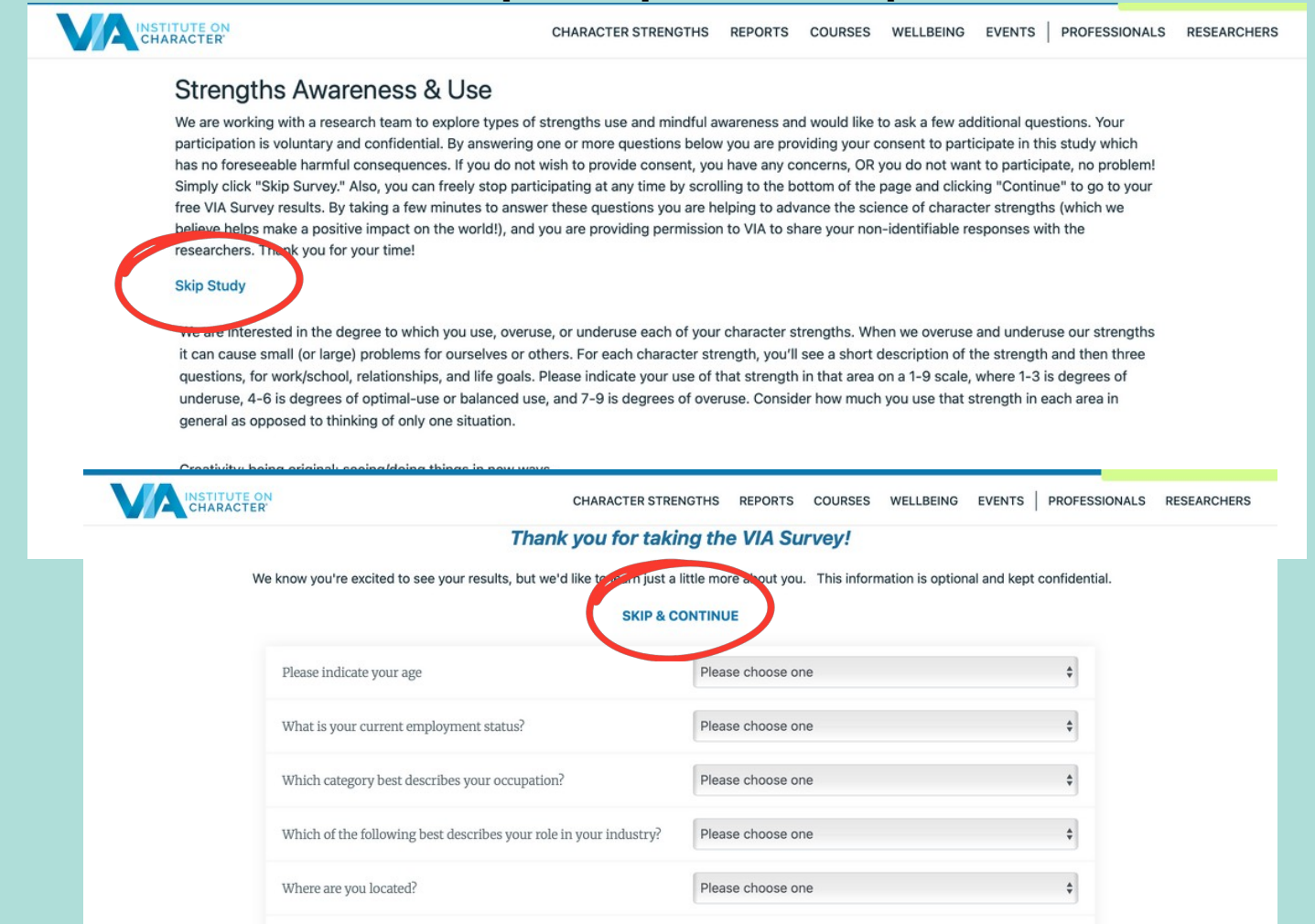
# Group Activity

## Instructions:

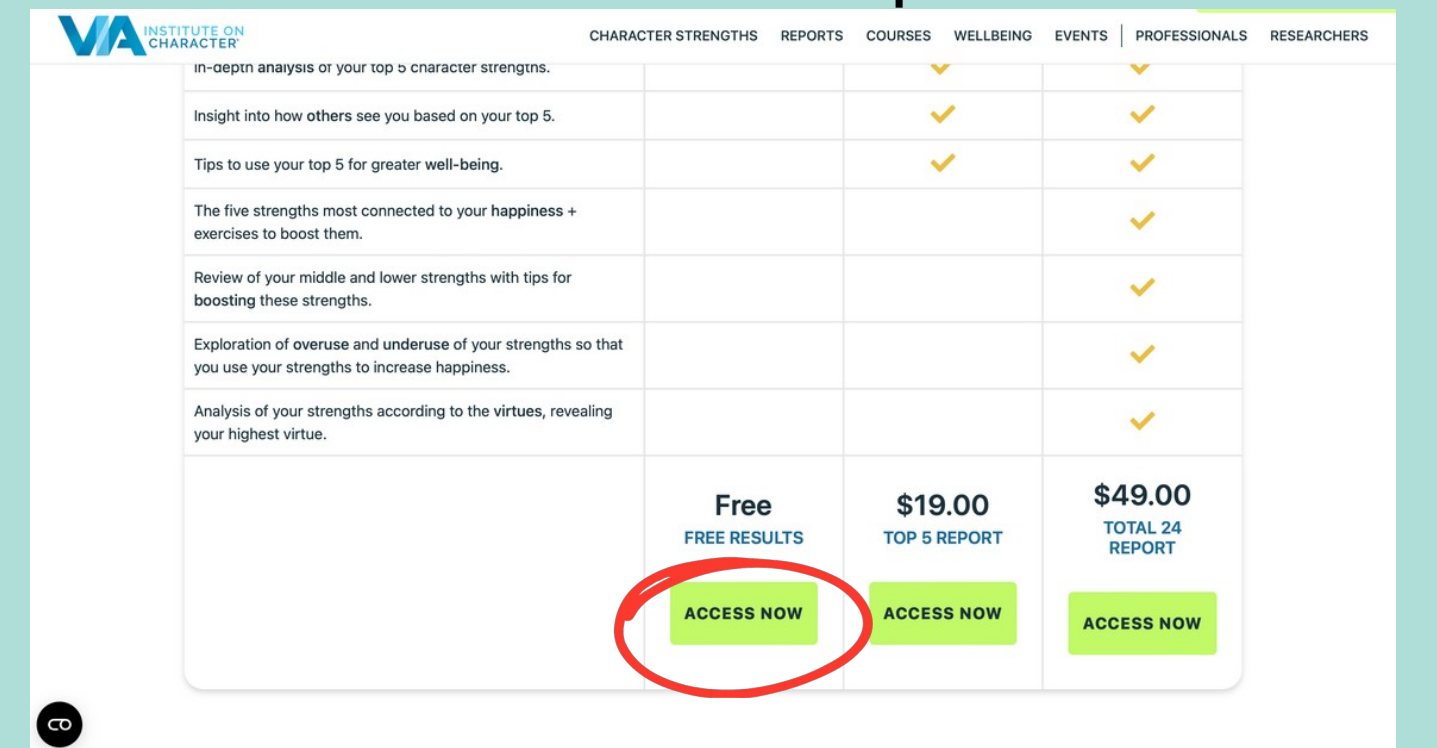
1. Go to [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org) and select “Take The Free Survey”
2. Register and create an account
3. Take the survey
4. You can skip the post-test questions
5. Click “Get Free Report”
6. Identify your top 5 character strengths



## You can skip the post-test questions



## Access the free report





# Reflection Questions



- Do the top 5 resonate with you as signature strengths?
- When you think about a time when you were functioning at your best (felt good to be you), which strengths were you harnessing?
- When you think of a time when you were stressed, tested, or feeling low, which strengths did you use to move forward?





# Practical Application

**Bringing our attention to conciously using our strengths and making committed  
action**

**toward the values and strengths that are already true of us allows us to experience  
meaning and accomplishment regardless of our environement  
and combat feelings of burnout**

How can you implement your strengths in your  
workplace?





# Some Examples

## **Strength**

Judgement: Ask one or two clarifying questions of someone who has a different approach to life or different beliefs than you

Perspective: For one of your interactions today: First, listen closely. Second, share your ideas and thoughts.

Love: Tell someone about a strength you saw them use and how much you value it.

Zest: Express energy through an outfit or fun accessory

Fairness: Include someone in a conversation who is typically excluded from groups or is a newcomer.

Forgiveness: Give yourself permission to make a mistake

Spirituality: Consider the sacredness of a given moment



# Q&A



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