

# MAPP Alumni Magazine

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Alumni

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## VIRTUAL INCUBATOR PROGRAM SHARES TRAITS FOR SUCCESS

by Carlton Galbreath, MAPP 2016

The MAPP Virtual Incubator Program (VIP) was started a few years ago to help MAPPsters who want to start a new positive psychology business, or grow their existing one. Multiple cohorts and a number of graduates later, it has become apparent that the ventures most likely to succeed share a few key traits. This article will provide a summary of those traits, as well as some resources to learn more about each one (none of the resource endorsements are paid).

### Customer-Centrism

Most entrepreneurs-to-be start off by focusing on what they want to offer - their brilliant invention, their world-class skill set that took decades to develop, their idea of how to solve a problem more efficiently than anyone else, etc. - and all of that is great! But none of it matters without a customer. The best entrepreneurs realize that "product-market fit" is the bullseye at which they must aim. An aesthetically beautiful and razor-sharp chef's knife is unsuitable for a 3 year-old, and a Tickle-Me-Elmo is probably not the best Christmas gift for the home cooking enthusiast in your life. Defining who your customer is, and just as importantly who your customer is not, is the place from



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which all VIP participants begin. VIP uses [the Lean Canvas](#) to help participants do so.

### There's Power in the Niche

Now that we know who your customer is, it's time to narrow it down. A lot. If you thought you were going to build a successful business selling chef's knives to home cooks or coaching to people who want to live their best life, you're in for a rude awakening. The digital age has lowered the barriers to entry for marketing and sales, but it's also crowded the arena, making it much harder to stand out and get people's attention. The VIP teaches its participants to get as specific as possible with the demographics and psychographics of their ideal customer because (a) that makes it much easier to reach said customer, and (b) if you develop a singular focus on one specific market, you'll be much more likely to delight customers instead of just satisfy them. This leads to referral business, rave reviews, high margins, and more. The essay [1,000 True Fans](#) explains this concept in greater depth, and HubSpot's free [Buyer Persona Tool](#) is a great resource to actually build your personas - think about a few different perfect-fit client personas, as well as a bad-fit "anti-client" persona, and go from there.

### The Value of Urgency - "Go Make \$1"

One of the first assignments in the VIP is to go make \$1 selling whatever product or service that your new venture will offer. Many of the participants have stated that this was the single most valuable task in the whole experience. Why might that be? Well, let's think about our community for a moment. We're almost all givers, and therefore love to share our gifts with the world freely so that they can benefit the most lives and truly feel like a "gift" instead of a transaction. We're also all people who were able to get into Penn and withstand the academic rigors of the MAPP program, and therefore likely have a much higher percentage of perfectionists in our midst than the average population. The "go make \$1" exercise (a) helps to show that what you have to offer is truly of value, (b) demonstrates that you and your client will actually show up more effectively when something tangible is at stake, and (c) pushes past the desire to tweak and perfect everything that so often mires projects down and commonly stops them from ever coming to exist at all. The book [To Sell Is Human](#) does a great job of destigmatizing "sales" and teaching the skills necessary to effectively influence others for their own betterment.

### The Importance of Community

Entrepreneurship is one of the best tools that the positive psychology community has to increase the "worldwide tonnage of well-being" - and it can also be an incredibly hard, lonely road. The value of having an entrepreneurial community is by far the most consistent piece of positive feedback that VIP participants provide upon graduation. Not only does it help to have a team of people around you who are going through similar things, who celebrate your wins and commiserate with your struggles, it also helps to have them around you so that you can learn from their experiences. To see the truth in a piece of feedback or to get clarity around how a concept might apply is much easier when it's not your project that's being tinkered with. The best entrepreneurs surround themselves with a great team - so whether you're hiring 100 people this year or just hoping to clear \$100, remember always that OPM, and the rest will follow.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carlton Galbreath, MAPP XI, is an entrepreneur, a growth (sales, marketing, and strategy) consultant, and the CEO of MAPP VIP - a virtual incubator program that focuses specifically on positive psychology ventures.



Prof. Lea Waters

## **PROFILE: PROFESSOR LEA WATERS, PH.D.**

by Elaine O'Brien, PhD, MAPP

*Professor Lea's goal is to help people thrive using the science of positive psychology*

At the 2017 University of Pennsylvania MAPP Summit, attendees had the opportunity to learn from an outstanding professor and celebrated speaker, Dr. Lea Waters. Lea was beginning her term as President of the International Positive Psychology Association, IPPA, and launching her landmark book, *The Strengths Switch* <https://www.strengthswitch.com/> while serving on the World Happiness Council's Council on Happiness & Education, and working as the dedicated founding Director of the Centre for Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne, where she had worked for more than 20 years. Lea was named one of the Top 100 Women of Influence in Australia by the *Financial Times* and included in the Who's Who of Australian Women by Marques

I had first met Lea Waters when she, along with Caroline Miller, MAPP, presented exciting and provocative Keynote Addresses at the Canadian Positive Psychology Conference in 2016. After the conference, fellow MAPP conference presenters Kathryn Britton, Lisa Buksbaum, Caroline, Lea and I had an epic dinner overlooking the majestic Niagara Falls. The vistas were spectacular and it was a magical evening. Beyond the stunning views and good food, there seemed to be a melding of minds and hearts, as we took a deep dive, sharing personal stories and concerns, new friends supporting each other. It was truly powerful and a beautiful experience.

We caught up with Lea as she has been touring Canada, teaching and presenting, while gearing up with her team to produce the IPPA World Congress 2019 in Melbourne. Lea is one of the world's leading experts on Positive Education, Positive Organizations and Strength-Based Parenting and Teaching. As a University researcher/practitioner, Lea helps organizations, educators and parents around the world build resilience in their employees and children, helping them to thrive. Lea has published more than 100 scientific journal articles around turning her science into strength-based strategies.

Lea is now offering her evidence based *Strength Switch* Facilitated Parenting course accompanied by her established online Strength Switch program. Experienced coaches and facilitators with a background in Positive Psychology who are keen on helping families apply the *Strength Switch* strategies can apply to train. Qualified facilitators will receive a license which grants them access to course content, supporting materials, instructional videos, marketing tools, membership to the online Strength Switch Facilitator community across across the globe, and group coaching sessions with Prof Lea Waters. Check <https://www.strengthswitch.com/facilitator/>

Here's a short appreciative interview with Professor Lea Waters, Ph.D.:



**Elaine O'Brien:** Lea, who or what has influenced you the most in your trajectory around rising up Positive Education via The Strengths Switch?

**Lea Waters:** My purpose, and thus career trajectory, was forged through childhood adversity. Growing up with abuse had a profound impact on me that led to depression, anxiety and an eating disorder. I was 15 when I made the decision to become a psychologist and help kids like me and my sister and brother when I grew up. I still have that same calling at the age of 48. I love being a psychologist and I am so grateful that PP became a field during my career because I started my career working at the deficit end but these past 18 years I have shifted to the prevention end. It's deeply meaningful to see how my science helps create positive families and schools to give kids a good start to life. Losing my sister to suicide a few years ago was a devastating loss. It's the sharpest pain imaginable. In my times of deep grief since then I have found that my conviction to work with families and kids has strengthened even more. For me, it's been a lifelong journey of turning pain into purpose.

**Elaine O'Brien:** Lea, I am so sorry about your childhood adversity and the loss of your sister. You are in my heart. There is so much meaning, grace and power in your work. What has been the biggest surprise and/or inspiration?

**“My purpose, and thus career trajectory, was forged through childhood adversity”**

**Lea Waters:** The biggest inspirations are my own kids and seeing what happens when you put in the hard yards to break an intergenerational cycle of abuse, addiction and trauma. Positive psychology has played a big role in me being able to do this. I'm so thankful to the field for what it has given my kids.

The biggest surprise has been the incredible appetite for this work. My book has been translated into 10 languages and that's blown me away. I get lovely messages from parents and teachers across the world about how my work has changed them for the better. It's so heart warming and, at the same time, surprising because I grew up in a small town in Australia. I went to a small, standard state/public school and had many struggles at home. Growing up the way I did, I never dreamed that I'd have the honor and opportunity to have international impact.

Of course, like anything, there's a downside to the demand and there are many moments of feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and deal with 'mother guilt' while I travel. But I'm getting wisdom about when and how to say no and about giving myself permission to not have to heal the world single handedly. Now that I have facilitators running my courses and an on-line course it's a joy to see the way my work is spreading across the globe and impacting kids, parents, and teachers. It's also been touching to see the way the facilitators who are working with me grow.

**Elaine O'Brien:** I don't know how you do it all, and so beautifully. I remember and completely understand about the "mom guilt" Lea, you are a true positive role model and cheers on hosting the IPPA World Congress 2019 in Melbourne, Australia. Cheers Mate! What are you most excited about?

**Lea Waters:** That's a tricky question to answer because, honestly, I'm excited about so many things. It's exciting to know that we have speakers and delegates from almost 40 countries and there are so many new voices and new ideas on the program. To me, that's really exciting because it shows how our field is evolving.



I'm excited about the number of early career researchers as well as the number of practitioners and minority voices on our program. This is something that I put a lot of intentional effort into, going right back to 2016 when we first put in the bid to host the congress in Australia. I'm really proud of the diversity and inclusion of the 2019 Congress.

For the first time ever, 50% of the submitted speakers on the program are practitioners and we have a practitioner as a Plenary Speaker, a number of practitioners who are Key Note Speakers and many invited workshop presenters who are practitioners. I think this is going to really enrich the program.

Of course, I'm also excited to be hosting it in my beautiful hometown of Melbourne - world's most livable city - and to showcase Australian hospitality. Congress members will experience Australian food, Australian music, Australian wildlife (yep, you heard that correctly) and some really exceptional indigenous performers. Selfishly, I'm also excited about the fact that this will be my first world Congress where I won't be jetlagged. LOL.

**Elaine O'Brien:** That is brilliant. I love hearing about the diversity and that you are lifting up the role of the "necessary and beneficial" practitioner. How wonderful! Thanks so much for your contribution and inspiration Lea! I know this is a volunteer leadership role for you and I'm sure you have put in many hours these past two and half years.

**Lea Waters:** You're welcome. I appreciate your gratitude. It's been a labor of love, that's for sure. Many early mornings and late night. Many weekends fitting the congress planning around work and family. I've worked with some wonderful volunteers including Penn MAPPster's Leona Brandwene and Lisa Sansom as Review Committee Chairs. A bunch of UPenn and UMelb MAPPster's also assisted with the review process. It was a labor of love for all of us but it will be worth it when we are gathered together in July to learn from each other. Can't wait!

**Elaine O'Brien:** I'm so excited also know Diana Whitney and Caroline Miller are running an international Women's Appreciative Inquiry for IPPA World Congress 2019. As a woman who has been successful but still stayed warm and humble, what are your thoughts around advancing women, scholarship, and positive psychology?

**Lea Waters:** Underneath the fact that positive psychology is a scientific endeavor, what draws me to the field is the moral underpinnings of evolving our consciousness as a species. In order to grow and evolve as a species we need to be actively working on equality and honoring - not only for women but also for all minorities. When it comes to women, I'm really impressed and proud of the women in my field and what we have been able to achieve. It's meaningful to have the 'Thriving Women-Thriving World' preconference workshop being run by Diana and Caroline. I recently had a zoom session with them and they shared with me what they have designed for the day. It's sensational. I have strong confidence that many wise and concrete ideas will be generated from this day to help women in the field reach their potential and, thus, be able to raise others up. Lea's website is <https://www.leawaters.com/>



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Elaine O'Brien, PhD, MAPP, [www.ElaineOBrienPhd.com](http://www.ElaineOBrienPhd.com) is a pioneer in the Art of Fitness Science and Applied Positive Psychology, a researcher/practitioner, and a visionary propelling Community/Group Dance/Exercise for Healing, Learning, Flow, Flourishing. Elaine serves on IPPA's Positive Health and Wellness (PHW) Leadership Team, where she is an Associate Editor and Host of the new PHW Webinar series. Contact Elaine at [Move2Love@gmail.com](mailto:Move2Love@gmail.com)



Caroline Adams Miller

## Lifting Up Women, Families and Positive Psychology: Thriving Women, Thriving World at IPPA World Congress 2019, Melbourne Australian

Positive Psychology expert, expert speaker and prolific author of *Getting Grit*, Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP, and Dr. Diana Whitney will lead a full-day pre-conference summit that is designed to be a powerful, full engagement, highly experiential, illustration of how Appreciative Inquiry can be used to create dialogue, build and strengthen relationships, and foster learning, co-creation and inspired action around a “hot” topic of global significance. Everyone - male and female - who wants to participate in generating fresh ideas and positive conversations is welcome. If you are a positive psychologist, teacher, researcher, coach or consultant who is committed to transforming historical and cultural patterns of gender

inequality and abuse, please bring your energy and voice. And if you have a gender equality experiment, program or practice that you want others to know about, bring it!

*Thriving Women, Thriving World: The Book*

A book has been co-created in honor of the IPPA Summit and includes MAPP contributions from Caroline, Dr. Elaine O'Brien, Shannon Polly, Kathryn Britton. It can be pre-ordered and is already creating a buzz about being a very "important" book! <https://www.taosinstitute.net/thriving-women-thriving-world>

## WOMEN'S WELL-BEING MATTERS

by Carin Rockind, MAPP 2011

W

omen's well-being is perhaps the most pressing need of our time. Statistically, nearly twice as many women experience depression as men and a University of Pennsylvania research study several years ago found that women's happiness is declining. As the old sayings go, "Happy Wife; Happy Life" and "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!" Unfortunately, research shows that women are less confident than men, even though they are just as competent, and many research reports indicate that the majority of women dislike their bodies.

We can do better and we must! With women graduating in higher numbers from universities, women rising in leadership positions across the globe, and women still doing the bulk of home and childcare, women's well-being is critical for themselves and for everyone they support.

Fortunately, with the #metoo movement, women's marches, and like initiatives, women are waking up to their power, influence, and desire for healing and happiness.

To empower women, on October 18, 2018, I launched the first-ever worldwide initiative to elevate women's happiness, Women's Global Happiness Day (WGHD). A year beforehand, I had suffered my second miscarriage, and as hard as this is to admit, when the doctor told my husband and I that we lost the baby, I didn't want to live. So I dove into my toolbox: I meditated daily, leaned in to my "Sisterhoods" of female friends, drew upon my strengths, and explored how to turn this into



an experience of Post-Traumatic Growth.

During meditation one day, I asked the Universe, "Show me what else I'm here to birth". A vision came of women who also suffered: Women who work hard giving and giving, yet don't take care of themselves; women who feel stuck or lost in everyone else's needs; and women who suffer depression, anxiety and abuse. I then had a vision of women gathering in small circles all across the globe to learn the science of



positive psychology, and Women's Global Happiness Day was born!

In its inaugural year, I would have been happy with 10 events as a "pilot". But the positive psychology and women's empowerment communities responded and we ended up with 98 events in 19 countries on 6 continents! From Nigeria to New Zealand, Singapore to

Switzerland, the UK to the US, women hosted small groups from 5 to 25 women each, to declare their strengths, share their challenges, learn self-compassion, and identify hopes, desires and purpose. They created community and loved it! It was so successful that the second annual Women's Global Happiness Day will be held October 18, 2019, and our goal is to double impact! We're now looking for women interested in hosting an event, as well as organizations to sponsor. If interested, email [carin@carinrockine.com](mailto:carin@carinrockine.com) or [move2love@gmail.com](mailto:move2love@gmail.com).

There are many opportunities that use positive psychology to empower girls and women, and it's the perfect time to coordinate our efforts and maximize impact! So at the last annual MAPP Alumni Summit, I posted on the in-conference app that anyone interested in women's well-being to please join me for lunch. More than 30 people attended! A mix of mostly women, and a couple of brave, wholehearted men joined us to talk about why women's well-being matters. Each person shared her or his story and desire for impact. One woman shared her experience of childbirth; another of abuse. Together, we cried, we laughed and we left full of hope.

We're continuing this effort and we'd love for you to join us! I've partnered with Dr. Elaine O'Brien to create Women in Positive Psychology (WIPP), a joint effort to improve women's well-being and create a home for women in the field to connect, collaborate, and create shared resources that elevate worldwide flourishing.

Future opportunities in WIPP include personal and professional cooperation, mentorship, masterminds, discussion forums, education and much more. It's a "ground-up" effort of positive psychology practitioners coming together for great impact. We're creating a work group, monthly meetings, and we intend to



create sub-groups to explore different ideas. Plus, we launched a free online forum to share resources, collaborate on events, and support one another. It's available to anyone interested in being part of this new and growing community, and we'd love for you to join us! Click here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/285379742089656/?ref=share>

Women's well-being matters and we can each play a part. Whether it is engaging in self-care that radiates to everyone you touch; supporting your mother, sister, wife, colleagues or friends to use positive psychology resources; or empowering the women in your organization to flourish, we can all elevate women's well-being!



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carin Rockind, MAPP, is on a mission to change the world one woman at a time. Founder of PurposeGirl and Women's Global Happiness Day, she is a leading women's positive psychology educator who has empowered thousands of people through coaching, speaking for organizations like Capital One and BMW, and through her internationally-ranked show, The PurposeGirl Podcast. For more, visit [PurposeGirl.com](http://PurposeGirl.com).

## LOOK FOR THE HUMOR, LOOK FOR THE HUMANITY

by Sean Doyle

Watch as a child enters the room. So often, they'll scan and look for things with which they can play, or for another child with whom they can make an instant friend. Meanwhile, those of us who are more mature and with important things to do, avoid eye contact with one another and exchange only niceties and pleasant greetings.

Zest, that wholeheartedness of living, is one of those attributes that have a robust correlation with a deep satisfaction in life. While our children exhibit it naturally and beautifully, somewhere along the line most of us lose this mirthful path to joy and fulfillment.

**“McGraw and Warren posit that all humor arises from benign violations”**

We know from the studies in gratitude that people who look for, and write down, the things that they are grateful for, are happier with life. And the more you do it, the more natural it becomes. We begin to see what has been right before our eyes all the time. So with the *Ten Thousand Things* swirling around us every day, what if we look for,

document and savor, the opportunities for humor and playfulness that are all around us?

There are different theories about humor; some based on superiority, incongruity or relief. I don't address them all here and don't have time for those that involve belittling or minimizing others. There are sufficient opportunities for laughter in our lives without ever having to hurt or harm.

McGraw and Warren posit that all humor arises from benign violations: (i) A situation is violated, (ii) that situation is benign and (iii) both perceptions appear simultaneously.



The first part is easy. Stuff goes wrong all the time. Our most diligent plans fall apart. We trip over social norms. Things that once worked for us, fail. And then there are all those things that just get on our nerves or under our skin: The guy who cuts us off in traffic, the child on the airplane kicking the back of our seat. Or the time the dog was so excited about the Christmas tree, he peed all over the presents when the children were sleeping.

These are all violations. But are they *really* severe or malign? Are they worth our getting angry or irritated, or disrupting our joy? When we pay attention, most of the intrusions and infractions in our lives are mild or manageable, and even quite funny.

The eight Buddhist monks had been at work for days, sitting cross-legged on the floor, shifting grain after grain of colored sand into a mandala, a depiction of where the deities reside. When they came back again in the morning, they discovered that a happy toddler had found their spot. He slipped beneath the rope, looking for a place to play, and in a few moments, danced on the work they had done. And so the monks laughed and laughed and laughed. And then they started their mandala all over again.

Like the gratitude log that has worked so well for so many, what if we went out looking for the humor all around us? Or if we sought out the opportunities for playfulness and laughter that are right in front of our eyes? And like the small child with his instant friend, what if we invited others to share in our play?



Now of course, not every violation is innocuous and benign. What of those that are corrosive or malignant or tear at our hearts? Someone gets hurt, or a loved one falls ill.

We know how our biases work, how we notice and find what we go looking for. And we know too, that what we see and believe fuels our resilience and happiness and sense of hope. It does not mean that the other narratives are untrue. They are just incomplete. When faced with the horrible or disheartening, look for the humanity that is there. See out evidence that restores our faith in one another. Pay attention to the opportunities to connect with those other living/breathing beings with whom we are twirling around the sun. Looking for the humor, looking for the humanity, is a good, pragmatic, practical strategy to living in a world where all types of violations occur.

After all, life should be about laughter and joy and making things a little bit easier and more gentle for one another. After all, as the poet said, we have everything on this earth that we need to make life worth living. Go out and find it.

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1 The character strengths most highly related to life satisfaction are hope ( $r = .53$ ), zest ( $r = .52$ ), gratitude ( $r = .43$ ), curiosity ( $r = .39$ ), and love ( $r = .35$ ). These strengths consistently and repeatedly show a robust, consistent relationship with life satisfaction. Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology*, 23, 603–619. Summary of the study retrieved directly from the VIA Institute on Character: <http://www.viacharacter.org/>

2 When compared with U.S. adults, youth from the U.S. are higher on the character strengths of hope, teamwork, and zest and adults are higher on appreciation of beauty & excellence, honesty, leadership, open-mindedness. Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2006). Moral competence and character strengths among adolescents: The development and validation of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29, 891-905. Summary of the study retrieved directly from the VIA Institute on Character: <http://www.viacharacter.org/>

3 Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377–389.

4 In the Tao Te Ching, “The Ten Thousand Things,” was meant to refer to the indefinitely large, uncountable, multitude of all forms and beings in manifest existence. See also, μύριοι or myrioi, from Classical Greek for a myriad; ten thousand; a practically uncountable number.

5 For an extensive list of research on Benign Violation Theory by Peter McGraw and Caleb Warren, see [http://leeds-faculty.colorado.edu/mcgrawp/Benign\\_Violation\\_Theory.html](http://leeds-faculty.colorado.edu/mcgrawp/Benign_Violation_Theory.html)

6 Campbell, M. (2007, May 23). Toddler's dance destroys monks' intricate sand painting. *The Kansas City Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=63,4179,0,0,1,0#.XKAQFphKg2x>

7 Darwīsh, M. (2013). *On This Earth*, In M. ‘Akash, C. Forché, S. Antoon, A. El-Zein, & F. Joudah, (Eds and Trans.) *Unfortunately, it was paradise: Selected poems*. (p. 6) Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Doyle (MAPP 2006) is a poet and long-time lawyer and taught psychology at NC State for close to a decade. Called the “poetic voice of positive psychology,” Sean’s book, *Mud and Dreams*, is a series of essays about overcoming hardship and falling deeper in love with life. For more, please see [www.JohnSeanDoyle.com](http://www.JohnSeanDoyle.com)

## ENTREPRENEURIAL GRANTS: WOULD ARISTOTLE APPROVE?

by Marita James

For the past decade, I worked on the business side of clinical research. These companies took part in discovering drugs that still save millions of lives. On one lab tour, I noticed that morale was low, and a few senior scientists seemed almost apologetic. They were hitting clinical targets but missed what had become a higher priority, financial targets. It was difficult to see talented people lose sight of such meaningful work. A double loss because new metrics show that financial returns can improve when employees have a sense of meaning and autonomy.

There’s a group of projects that might not be so quick to trade passion for dollars because the people behind them understand the value of engagement. They are part of the Penn MAPP Alumni Association, graduates of a masters’ program in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP). Positive Psychology looks at the long-term factors that can lead to strengths-based thinking. The field values accomplishment, but on par with other values, such as engagement, constructive relationship and a desire to serve something larger than the self.



MAPP grads range in age, experience and career choice, but come to recognize a shared view; other people matter. This view is at the core of what is called an 'Aristotelian' friendship. A relationship where two people find it rewarding to offer good intentions and support to the other. The Aristotelian orientation can operate on a larger scale, and it's the foundation of the MAPP alumni grant program. The people behind the scenes get no direct return and those that receive money are entrusted to 'pay it forward'. Yet, there is a payback, inspiration is contagious.

Enthusiasm may be a driver, but the scope of these projects requires skill. A common theme in MAPP is to grow social good, and that's producing uncommon results. Too many redundant businesses are set up to grab market share and they simply overload consumers with choice. In contrast, MAPP project leaders bring new vision, looking for wide scale improvement or a shift in conventional practice. It's bold, and the change they seek calls for creative solutions.

In the first wave of 2017, six projects were funded. Of those, there are attempts to transform long established systems. One aims to increase philanthropy by bringing evidence-based flourishing to high net worth individuals. Another calls for educators to consider the value of positive psychology in law schools. There are two ventures that



Jennifer Cory, a MAPP Grant Award winner

inform. One is a program to prime entrepreneurs in socially aware business. The other gives visibility to the field of positive psychology by offering a series of social media videos that explain the science behind PERMA. Then there are two for-profit ventures that could have broad impact if they reach their vision. One will extend resilience training to Fire, Emergency Medical and other first responders. Another offers an alternative to LinkedIn, a profile with depth that matches talent based on strengths. The goals are ambitious but as each inch forward, the world shifts more positive.

The alumni grants offer the first few seed dollars to get the idea off the ground. It's too early to know if any will take root but if they do succeed, the projects will return dollars along with another currency; they all add meaning. Time will tell but there's already an undeniable conclusion. ROI is elevated when other people matter.

So, would Aristotle approve? In a sundial minute.

To contribute to the ongoing success of the MAPP Alumni Grant Program, go to <https://mappalum.org/Donations>



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Marita James, CPA, MAPP (2013) consults with entrepreneurs, blending finance with strengths-based science to create corporate value. Prior, she was a CFO in global clinical research, investment banking, and biotech venture funding. Marita is motivated by individual potential that is created within a positive organization.

## PENN LAW BREAKS NEW GROUND IN STUDENT WELL-BEING

by John Hollway

The University of Pennsylvania Law School, with substantial support from the MAPP Community, has introduced an innovative program designed to enhance student well-being and combat pervasive challenges to thriving that exist both in law school and in the legal profession.

It's no secret that the legal profession is facing significant challenges. Law was ranked as "America's loneliest profession" by the Harvard Business Review, and in a survey of licensed, practicing lawyers, 21% self-reported as problem drinkers, 28% reported some level of depression, 19% demonstrated symptoms of anxiety, and 23% reported struggles with stress.

These challenges exist on top of the challenges that law students face in school – challenges that are academic, social, and financial. Together, these pressures can be overwhelming, and as a law professor and administrator, they were a big motivator to enroll in MAPP in September 2017.

I knew at the time that I had many supportive colleagues at Penn Law eager to benefit from positive psychology. "It's part of our institutional DNA to prepare our students for the real-life practice of law," says Jennifer Leonard, executive director of Penn Law's Center on the Profession (COP). "And I had suffered from anxiety myself as a law student and practicing lawyer. We were already experimenting

University of Pennsylvania Law School Photo by Jeffrey M. Vinocour



with optional seminars on resilience and the psychology of lawyers, and were paying close attention to the ABA's National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being, which has recommendations for law schools as well as law firms to improve well-being throughout the profession. So when we learned about MAPP's Service Project partnership, we jumped at the opportunity."

Leonard and the Law School volunteered to take part in MAPP 714, "Applying Positive Interventions." It pairs cohorts of current MAPP students with organizations seeking practical applications of positive psychology. MAPPsters Sharon Danzger, Joseph Glaser-Reich, Rebecca Lamperski, and Mary Beth Rettger threw themselves at the task, generating a multi-pronged plan to enhance the well-being of first-year law students. Focusing on first-years created a "ground up" opportunity for new law students, and the more structured and standardized schedule ensured that all incoming students would receive the learnings. The proposal included a workshop on the redefinition of stress; a moot court activity (*Your Style on Trial*) that trains students to confront negative explanatory styles and thinking traps; and positive psychology posters that offer perspective and wisdom from Penn Law alumni (e.g., "I got a B- in torts. I still got a job.")

"We loved the proposal and immediately moved to implement the workshop on redefining stress," said Leonard, "creating a presentation that was given to the entire first year class in November, about a month before their first semester finals."

The workshop proved to be very popular with the students, and the Law School plans to offer it to first-year students again in the fall – only this time, earlier in the academic year to provide students with ample opportunity to practice the skills throughout the challenging first semester.

Buoyed by the success of the first-year session, and supported by recommendations from the ABA's National Task Force on Attorney Well-Being, Leonard and I decided to design a curriculum that could also be taught to upper-level law students. We approached Penn Law's Dean, Ted Ruger, with the idea that we could make teachings about well-being a required part of the Professional Responsibility (Legal Ethics) class, which is a one required course for all upper-level law students. This would reinforce the first-year workshop and ensure that every Penn Law student would get some exposure to tools for self-directed flourishing.

We started with the first-year session on reframing stress, and expanded it with modules on resilience, optimistic versus pessimistic speaking styles, and for one professor, an extra session on the use of character strengths to further legal and career goals. We are piloting the program in the spring 2019 semester, deploying it across five different sections of students. We have customized the program to fit the slightly different substantive focus of individual professors, allowing us to learn a lot faster what resonates with the students and where they see the value in the topics.

It appears that Penn Law is the first law school in the country to have a well-being component in a required course for academic credit. Initial reactions from the students have been overwhelmingly positive. "They really like the material, and truly appreciate it when we show them how the skills are practically useful to their day to day lives, now as students and later as practicing lawyers," says Leonard.

We are already planning where to go next, working on designing a semester-long course that will delve into the topics raised in the module in more depth and talking to faculty and staff about implementing wellness interventions throughout the law school. We've been fortunate to have a



Dean and an administration that see well-being skills as both legal skills and life skills, and we're excited to keep transmitting that to our students – but we would not be at this point without the MAPP Program. From Anne Brafford (MAPP 9) and her leadership of the ABA Task Force to the MAPP 13 Service Project Cohort and beyond, MAPP has been with us every step of the way!



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John F. Hollway (C'92, MAPP '18) is Associate Dean at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and Executive Director of the Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice. His research helps public and for-profit organizations confront challenges, improve culture, and turn negative occurrences into opportunities for quality improvement. He is a national thought leader on the use of root cause analysis in criminal justice, and is a frequent consultant to criminal justice agencies and corporations on quality improvement and measurement issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Achor, S., Kellerman, G., Reece, A., & Robichaux, A. (2018). America's loneliest workers, according to research. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/03/americas-loneliest-workers-according-to-research>.

<sup>2</sup> Krill, P. R., Johnson, R., & Albert, L. (2016). The prevalence of substance use and other mental health concerns among American attorneys. *Journal of Addiction Medicine* 10(1), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Danzger, S. F., Glaser-Reich, J., Lamperski, R., & Rettger, M. B. (2018). From eminence to preeminence: Developing resilience and well-being for Penn Law students. Retrieved from [https://repository.upenn.edu/mapp\\_slp/14/](https://repository.upenn.edu/mapp_slp/14/).

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** A Well-Being Toolkit, for the American Bar Association: [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer\\_assistance/ls\\_colap\\_well-being\\_toolkit\\_for\\_lawyers\\_legal\\_employers.authcheckdam.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/lawyer_assistance/ls_colap_well-being_toolkit_for_lawyers_legal_employers.authcheckdam.pdf)

## THE POSITIVE COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP AT THE 2018 FETE

by Aren Cohen, MAPP '07

As someone who works in education, at the 2018 Fete I chose to attend the fantastic workshop led by Ryan Wynia, MAPP '17, on the topic of positive computing technology looking for some optimistic answers to my skeptical beliefs about technology. Working with students, I often wonder about how to teach kids to how to determine what is reliable information. Also, having recently read *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age* by Catherine Steiner-Adair and Teresa Barker, I am concerned about how technology is affecting children's brain development **and** their interpersonal relationships. Finally, I had recently watched the documentary about Mr. Rodgers called *Won't You Be My Neighbor*. It had gotten me thinking I had been about how a historical technology (TV) was used in the best possible way to affirm children and their humanity, but ultimately cartoons, not programming replicas of Mr. Rodger's loving and profoundly humanist approach or even learning friendly shows Sesame Street, proliferated as children's TV in the 1980's and beyond.

Subtitled "Designing New Technology-Enabled Positive Interventions," Wynia challenged us to consider how computing technology could be actively harnessed within positive psychology to



support positive interventions. My personal concerns about how technology causes all sorts of new conundrums with children and teenagers made me immensely curious to see what new research and questions are being asked about how technology and positive psychology connect.

Wynia provided attendees with an excellent handout that lent structure the conversation and introduced various concepts that would influence our discussion. Not only providing an agenda, Wynia reminded us of Lyubomirsky's Happiness Enhancing Strategies and The Variables of Personal Experience and Pathways to Personal Experience Enhancement outlined by Riva et al. We contemplated how computing technology could be harnessed around emotional quality, engagement and connectedness to enhance happiness.

Additionally, Wynia presented his review of Theories of Technological Harm, including Deindividuation, Privacy and Social Access, Behavior Addiction, Information Foraging and Goal Interference. Within the context of these four constraints, the group examined the Positive Paradox that currently emerges from the use of computing technology in positive interventions. Arguably, Facebook or Instagram could be positive interventions that facilitate connectedness by nurturing relationships, practicing acts of kindness and savoring life's joys. Yet more often than not, we see for ourselves and hear from the media that the trends of technological harm have more success interfering with intended goals rather than facilitating them.

In our conversation, we focused on the roles technology companies have designing the technologies we use. Wynia and the group agreed that technology companies must focus more on social and ethical corporate responsibility, and shift their focus from economic rewards to designing technology that works in the service of supporting the condition of human flourishing.

I am optimistic that this moment will come sooner rather than late. More and more Silicon Valley engineers are asking important questions about the products they design, and find that they are making radically different choices for how they use technology in their homes (and especially with their children). One hopes that this new generation of tech experts will seek out the work of positive psychology as they create new iterations of hardware and software that support human flourish. At the same time, it is imperative that the positive psychology community remain not only engaged in these questions, but also committed to doing independent, empirically-based scientific research to help corporate America find the pathways and tools to design technologies that empower and enhance the human and human-tech experience.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Aren Cohen, MBA, MAPP is a Learning Specialist and Independent Educational Consultant with a practice named "Strengths for Students." Using positive psychology and proven educational philosophies and techniques, Aren works with academically, motivationally and emotionally challenged students.

## POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY UNDERPINS BRIAN SELANDER'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR SUCCESS

by Lisa Sansom, MAPP '10



Brian Selander

A teenage filmmaker once surprised MAPP 03's Brian Selander at an awards banquet with some video testimonials for a leadership award. They included two United States Senators, an executive that Brian built two multimillion dollar companies with and someone who said "I would not be Governor today were it not for Brian, his advocacy, his leadership, his mentorship and his friendship..." But the words that struck Brian most came from people whose careers he helped launch in the public and private sectors and whose perspectives (aided by his MAPP training!) that Brian helped change and inspire.

There are so many MAPP alums succeeding in the private sector and so many more succeeding in the public sector and non-profit spaces. Brian's a bit unique in that he straddles both worlds. He's been the President of a media company and Managing Director of a management consulting firm that were both acquired and was the "Offensive Coordinator" to a sports network he launched and grew to 250 million fans and followers. But he's also been the chief strategy officer to a Governor, the multi-state director on a Presidential campaign, and Communications Director to a United States Senator. He is currently the President and COO of ownable - an eCommerce company he and his friends launched last fall that scaled within weeks to a few million dollars a month in revenue. We caught up with him for this month's MAPP magazine.

### **How did MAPP change your life?**

The further away I get from my MAPP year, the more profound the effects seem to be. It's like changing the direction of a boat – just a few degrees course correction early on makes miles of difference once you're underway.

### **How would you describe that change?**

MAPP made me realize that I'd spent too much time earlier in life wondering "why me?" when bad things happened. Although it's a "positive psychology" degree, it also really helped identify negative feedback loops and rumination ruts to avoid. Instead of focusing so much on what went wrong, I've been challenging myself and others to find examples of what could go right. Someone is going to get that job. Someone is going to build that company. Someone is going to win that election. Someone is going to found that non-profit – ask yourself instead - "Why not me?" It's such a powerful question and it's one I've been sharing with young leaders all over the world who've come back with inspiring answers and amazing results.

### **Why the focus on young people? So much of your social media stream is dedicated to their stories.**

Even at 42, I probably have more days behind me than ahead of me. So you really need to find ways to multiply the impact of those days. If you can help change a person's trajectory early in life, you've made decades of difference. This is the first generation in history to look at the rest of the world as friends they just haven't met yet. At least, that's the hope. If all of us don't keep committed to reminding people about how much we have in common and how much connects us all, we run the real risk that this is the first generation who might instead look at the rest of the world as threats



they haven't faced yet. I don't know if they still assign it at MAPP because he'd refined it several times since, but Jonathan Haidt's "The Happiness Hypothesis" and his lectures to our class really laid out real global challenges.

**So, given those challenges – why leave the Governor's office to build a sports network, a millennial content company and an eCommerce company? Aren't those inherently less "positive" than public policy?**

Ouch. Part of it was knowing there were so many amazing people ready to work in public positions. Part of it was the chance to try and build mission-driven companies. Our sports network was the UN's partner in conquering malaria and the First Lady's in inspiring better health. Our eCommerce company helps families improve their credit and avoid the predatory rent to own places where they'd shopped before. A big part of it was about being able to really understand technology. Millennials and younger are digital and social natives – they have an almost innate mastery of platforms that are changing the world. I was a later arrival to it and wanted full immersion in how people create, share, connect, monetize and thrive. It's been an incredible education.

**You don't make many MAPP events but you always seem up for a video chat. What keeps you involved as an alum?**

Isn't technology amazing? It's so great to be able to talk with the MAPP VIP group, or drop in on Louis Alloro's groups that he's teaching. Our office is also a block off Locust Walk for people back in town to visit campus.

**Can you wrap up this interview with a meaningful story?**

Yes. Here's one that proves the positive psychology is about meaning more than smiles. Rachel was very sick. Her mother told the Governor's office that she'd love some day to be Governor, but it wasn't clear she'd ever have the chance. So he made her Governor for the Day. His profile picture on all his accounts became hers. The Cabinet came in and presented to her at "her desk" in the office. She even got to sign a proclamation asking for "more rainbows." A local business owner saw me share her story on Facebook and got inspired to convince businesses and people all over to change their profile pictures for a day to "Rainbows for Rachel." Even international companies like Astra Zeneca joined in. Rachel got her wish and we were all reminded about the power to make the world a better, more engaged place when people are willing to put in the work.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Lisa specializes in creating positive organizations through her speaking, training, coaching and consulting, working with individuals, teams, managers and leaders. Lisa now works in Organizational Development at Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. Lisa is on the founding board of the Canadian Positive Psychology Association where she serves in the role of Vice Chair. She has served as the VP (2010-2012) and the President (2012-2014, 2015-2017) of the MAPP Alumni Association.





Scott Asalone

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *Make A Difference*

By Scott Asalone, MAPP 2008

*I* was walking into Wegmans the other day when I watched a wonderful interaction. A teenager was pushing the carts toward the entrance of the store. He noticed that a woman, who had just pulled in to the parking lot, was struggling to get her two infants out of the car and into the store. He grabbed

one of the carts that has seats for children and ran it over to her. I heard her exclaim "Oh thank you. That helps. It has just been one of those days." Then as the teen turned away from her I saw a radiant smile light up his face.

Have you even wondered why we are here? What is life really about? It is possibly one of the most powerful questions of all time and has been catalytic to religions, philosophies, moralities, etc. Yet great thinkers continue to opine on the possible answers.

**"Positive psychology has given us the tools to make a positive difference in the world"**



However, I'm coming to believe that the question is a very personal one. Or perhaps it is the answer that is very unique and personal. Why are you here? Why am I here? One of the answers that has come down to us over the centuries is that many people want to leave a legacy. From the pyramids of Egypt to the current "tagging" of graffiti that proliferates we want others to know we existed.

We have an amazing opportunity with the knowledge we share as practitioners of positive psychology. We can make a difference in the lives of other people. When you read through the six proposals that the MAPP grant program funded you can see MAPPsters offering to make a difference utilizing everything from research to education to business. That difference will happen on both large scales and smaller scales and will impact lives. Isn't that the greatest legacy to leave behind?

The challenge is that some of us might read through these pages and think we are not doing enough. That is not true. Any interaction that helps another person is one that is worthy of these pages. Any outreach, shoulder to cry on, or skill building that enables another person to have an easier day or live a better life is one to be proud of.

Recently an email was forwarded to me from an alumni who worried that positive psychology was becoming too focused on individual happiness and becoming too commercial. But when you read through the articles here, when you speak to MAPPsters and hear what they are doing, when you know that you did something, even small, to make a difference in someone's life, then you know that positive psychology has given us the tools to make a positive difference in the world.

There is no easy answer to the grand questions of life. That's why they are the grand questions. However, there is an easy answer for us in our daily lives. How often do you get that radiant smile, the laugh, or just that feeling of pride when you make a difference in someone's life? Living with that focus every day makes life worth living and changes the lives of anyone we interact with.

– Scott