What is Positive Psychology?
Positive Psychology is the scientific study of human strengths and virtues.
   – What makes us happy, live more fulfilling and satisfying lives

Psychologists have spent much time studying negative emotions such as anger and depression rather positive emotions such happiness and joy.

Why More "Positive" Research?
   1. Getting rid of the negative is not enough.
      Positive Psychology goes a step further.
      There is a continuum -1 0 1
      – It is about getting from 0 to 1

   2. Prevention through cultivating the positive
      Prevent people from getting to -1 by increasing self-esteem, positive relationships, resiliency, etc.

Happiness Set-Point
Scientists believed that our set-point of happiness was genetically determined.
Twin Studies - It is estimated that about 50% of our happiness is accounted for by genes. (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996)

Neuroplasticity (Davidson, 2000)
   – Happy people show greater activity in the left pre-frontal cortex than unhappy people.

   There is evidence that pathways can grow.
   – As you do more of something you are creating new pathways in the brain.

Genes matter
But there is more...
Studies indicate that happiness is also a product of:
   – the way we think and behave
   – our circumstances and experiences

The How of Happiness – Sonja Lyubomirsky
A closer look at the 10% of happiness
Counterintuitive – most people believe that circumstances account for a much higher percentage

What about the 40% that is under our control?
Our ‘intentional activities’ - how we think and what we do, can increase or decrease our level of happiness
   – Our ability to become happier depends on the management of our emotions, thoughts, and actions

Applying Positive Psychology
It improves many important aspects of life
– Healthcare
– Education
– Communities
– Work life and organizations
– Everyday life...