Embodied Positive Psychology Pre-Summit and Summit

Workshop Schedule

**PRE-SUMMIT WORKSHOPS**

Participants in the Embodied Positive Psychology Pre-Summit select one of three programs to spend three days of focus on. Please have your workshop number on hand when calling to register.

Program Schedule

April 24–26, Sunday–Tuesday
Sunday, 7:30–9:00 pm
Monday, 8:30–11:30 am and 1:30–3:30 pm
Tuesday, 8:30–11:30 am

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**Get inSPIRED: Let Your Yoga Dance for Positive Psychology [EPPSP-161:S1]**

*Megha Nancy Buttenheim with special guest Maria McManus*

Let Your Yoga Dance is one of the most fun, exuberant, high-spirited elements of WBI’s Certificate in Positive Psychology (CiPP). It also goes deep, providing opportunities for self-care and self-awareness. Megha has created an Expanding Joy movement curriculum that embodies the teaching tenets of positive psychology and SPIRE, WBI’s approach to whole-person well-being—encompassing Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Relational, and Emotional aspects of the self.

Come get inSPIRE-ed through the dance of yoga as we

- Learn about the latest studies in embodied psychology
- Explore the SPIRE methodology through movement
- Practice feeling resilience, compassion, joy, zest, and love in the body, not just the mind.

Speaker and writer Maria McManus, a CiPP graduate, will join Megha to provide an evidence-based understanding of why Let Your Yoga Dance for Positive Psychology takes happiness to a whole new level.

**Megha Nancy Buttenheim, MA, E-RYT 500**, is founding director of Let Your Yoga Dance. She serves on the faculty of the Wholebeing Institute’s Certificate in Positive Psychology and spent 30 years as a yoga teacher trainer at Kripalu. Megha is committed to bringing the dance of yoga to everyone, of all ages, including people who feel marginalized due to age, Parkinson’s, MS, or Alzheimer’s. She is the creator of the Yoga DVD Introduction to Yoga and Meditation and two dynamic yoga CDs, *Moontides* and *Power and Grace.*

[letyouryogadance.com](http://letyouryogadance.com)
Maria McManus, a graduate of the Certificate in Positive Psychology, writes and speaks on the topic of how technical and non-technical people can work together productively and creatively. A former Vice President of Product Development at iVillage and Director of User Experience Design at the Disney Internet and Media Group, Maria champions emotionally intelligent leadership and product design.

Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice [EPPSP-161:S2]
Ryan Niemiec, PsyD

Character strengths are those universal personality characteristics that are the best parts of yourself, such as gratitude, hope, social intelligence, bravery, curiosity, or fairness. Mindfulness is a way of working with your attention that can boost self-awareness and deployment of these qualities. As the research around both areas has grown exponentially in the past decade, practitioners from the fields of coaching, psychology/counseling, education, and business are integrating these territories and applying them in their work.

Ryan Niemiec’s Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP) approach weaves together the perennial wisdom and science of mindfulness with the modern science and practice of character strengths. MBSP has been piloted with success across multiple cultures, and adaptations for specific populations are being developed. Ryan’s work has been described by meditation luminaries and Positive Psychology leaders as “a remarkable contribution to the field of transformation and awakening.”

In this interactive workshop, which includes dyad work, small-group discussions, mindfulness/strengths exercises, and meditations, you learn

- Why mindfulness and character strengths are important to well-being
- New ideas, research snippets, and practices that can be immediately applied, personally and professionally
- The pros and cons of autopilot mind and an approach for working with autopilot
- How your signature strengths impact your daily life—and why it’s more important to amplify top strengths than to boost lower strengths
- How signature strengths can overcome obstacles in mindfulness practices.

**Note** Participants are asked to take the free, online VIA Survey (viacharacter.org) prior to the workshop and bring their results.

**Recommended Reading** *Mindfulness and Character Strengths: A Practical Guide to Flourishing*, by Ryan Niemiec, which includes a 10-track CD (available in paper or e-book formats).

**Ryan Niemiec, PsyD**, is a psychologist and the education director of the global nonprofit VIA Institute on Character, the leader in advancing the science and practice of character strengths. He is the author of several books, including *Mindfulness and Character Strengths* and *Positive Psychology at the Movies*, and creator of Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice (MBSP), the first structured program for building character strengths. Ryan is an adjunct professor at Xavier University, the University of Pennsylvania, and IE University in Madrid. He created a track on mindfulness/strengths (“Awaken Your Potential”) for the web/app-based platform Happify, blogs for Psychology Today, and has offered hundreds of presentations on these topics across the globe, including an MBSP workshop tour of Australia in 2015. rynniemiec.com
Cultivating Positive Teams and Group Environments [EPPSP-161:S3]

Phoebe Atkinson and Nancy Kirsner

According to Christopher Peterson, a pioneer in the field of positive psychology, “It is within groups that we live, work, love, and play, and groups should therefore be a primary focus of researchers interested in health and well-being.”

In this workshop, you learn the research related to teams and groups, and experience firsthand the impact of Positive Psychology principles blended with traditional models of interpersonal effectiveness. Informed by the appreciative and strengths-based practices of positive psychology and Positive Organizational Scholarship, we explore the key ingredients to enhance interpersonal team dynamics and cultivate flourishing environments. Informed by the real-life lessons from WBI’s Certificate in Positive Psychology course, we also look at how these practices are applied by leaders and members of groups working in blended learning and virtual platforms.

Areas of focus include

- Common models of group development and team effectiveness, including Richard Hackman’s high-performing teams and Bruce Tuckman’s stages of group development
- The characteristics of good “morale” as described in Peterson’s “Group Well-Being” study
- Positive spiraling and expansive emotional contagion as applied to groups, viewed through the lens of Positive Organizational Scholarship and Sigal G. Barsade’s concept of “ripple effect” and emotional contagion
- How to build team connections using Jane E. Dutton’s sociometric and high-quality connections approaches for activating and accelerating team formation and increasing overall team effectiveness and group well-being.

Phoebe Atkinson, LCSW-R, is Teaching Assistant Mentor for the Certificate in Positive Psychology (CiPP) program in the United States. A graduate of the inaugural CiPP program at Kripalu, she is a licensed clinical social worker and a board-certified trainer, educator, and practitioner in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy. Phoebe’s areas of expertise include design and facilitation of clinical and corporate training programs. As a certified coach, she delivers executive leadership programs for Fortune 500 companies and, for the past 13 years, has co-facilitated a signature program at Rutgers University Institute for Women’s Leadership.

Nancy Kirsner, PhD, TEP, has more than 35 years of experience in the fields of mental health, education, and consulting. She began her professional life when group encounter work was a popular psychological intervention, and her fascination with groups inspired her to become board certified in action methods, groups, and sociometry (the social science of choice-making). Nancy delivers trainings throughout the United States, and specializes in translating concepts into teachable, tangible actions.
CONFERENCER

OPENING NIGHT | Tuesday, April 26

7:30–9:00 pm Opening Session
Embodiment is Wholeness
Megan McDonough
The summit begins with a welcome from Megan McDonough, cofounder and CEO of Wholebeing Institute (WBI). Megan explores what we mean by “embodied positive psychology” and lays out the vision for a multidimensional understanding of whole-person well-being. WBI’s SPIRE model includes five dimensions of embodiment: Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Relational, and Emotional. Learn how to apply this wholebeing perspective throughout the summit—and in every aspect of your life and work. Megan’s warmth, humor, and clarity will set the stage for a powerful, connection-filled event.

DAY ONE | Wednesday, April 27

8:30–10:00 am Morning Keynote
How Character Strengths Support Wholebeing
Neal Mayerson
Recent developments in Positive Psychology have uncovered important aspects of personality that can be powerful tools for constructing a thriving life—namely, character strengths. Like superfoods packed with powerful nutrients, these character strengths pack a powerful psychological punch. They can enhance performance and achievement, elevate well-being, and contribute to the collective good. They are primary tools for building good lives for ourselves and supporting others. They help us articulate and embody wholebeing. In this workshop, we explore the new science of character, and you learn how to quickly assess your character strengths and put them into action.

Day One Morning Workshops 10:15–11:30 am [choose one]

- Getting Unstuck: Activating Grit to Achieve Goals
  [WED-AM-01]
  Caroline Adams Miller
  For many of us, there comes a moment in our lives when change is necessary. How do you recognize that moment? Sometimes it’s an inner knowing, a gut feeling that propels you forward. Sometimes external events leave you no choice but to “get unstuck.” Regardless of the impetus, once you decide to set goals and go after them, there are many proven ways to increase your likelihood of success. In this workshop, you learn about the science of goal-setting, why the happiest people set and pursue difficult goals, and why the quality of grit is essential to a well-lived life. Caroline also delves into
  - The differences between learning goals and performance goals
  - How to set meaningful goals that are leveraged, intrinsic, and aligned with your purpose
  - What research shows about the importance of being happy before pursuing goals
  - How to use your strengths successfully in goal accomplishment
  - How to measure your “grit score” and cultivate grit
  - How to create an environment that triples the likelihood of success.
**Presence and Resilience in Difficult Conversations**

* [WED-AM-02]  
  *Louisa Jewell*

Even the best relationships face challenges sometimes. In order to maintain positive relationships, we need to be able to speak freely to the people we interact with about difficult issues. Rather than ignoring issues because we are fearful of confrontation or afraid we’ll ruin a relationship, we need new techniques to approach difficult conversations with confidence and emerge feeling good about the outcome. In this interactive workshop, you learn tools for having constructive conversations, including:

- How to confront a colleague or coworker without letting your emotions get in the way
- A five-step approach to managing difficult conversations in positive and constructive ways
- How to maintain a solution focus when having difficult conversations
- Ways to build better work relationships by encouraging open discussion.

Participants take home a workbook that serves as a reference for using these techniques.

**Embodying Compassion**

* [WED-AM-03]  
  *Sam Chase*

As the saying goes, “You have to learn to love yourself before you can learn to love someone else.” But what if the opposite were just as true? How does our love for others change our capacity to love ourselves? Today, yoga and contemplative practice are more popular than ever as a means of self-transformation and a path to personal enlightenment. But these tools can also be powerful catalysts for aiding others and cultivating a compassionate connection to the world at large. For every legend of the secluded mountaintop guru, there’s also a story of seva, or selfless service. Beyond the ideal of the Buddha, we find tales of the bodhisattvas—those who dedicate or even defer their own enlightenment for the betterment of all beings.

Using these models as a springboard, this workshop explores yoga and contemplative practices designed to charge the body with compassion. Through simple and accessible techniques of movement, meditation, and inquiry, we exercise our capacity for kindness and caring. Along the way, we mine evidence-based research showing how compassion and service transform us down to our very cells, and how the love we offer up circles back to strengthen our own self-love.

**Open Programming**

12:00–1:00 pm *Let Your Yoga Dance for Positive Psychology*
12:15–1:15 pm *Speaker Showcase*
11:30 am–1:30 pm *Lunch*

1:30–2:15 pm *Afternoon Keynote*

**Living with Lovingkindness**  
  *Sharon Salzberg*

Lovingkindness can be seen as a worldview, a deeply held aspiration, and an embodied ability to connect in a more profound way with ourselves and others. Lovingkindness meditation practice strengthens and integrates that ability. It is traditionally offered along with meditations that enrich compassion, joy in the happiness of others, and equanimity. These practices lead to the development of concentration, fearlessness, happiness, and a greater ability to love. In this keynote, renowned meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg offers a deeper understanding of lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, and how they relate to one another.
Day One Afternoon Workshops 2:45–3:45 pm [choose one]

- **The Practice of Lovingkindness**  
  [WED-PM-01]  
  *Sharon Salzberg*  
  Building on her keynote, Sharon dives deeper into the teachings of lovingkindness and supports us in our own experience and cultivation of the qualities of compassion, love, and equanimity, through direct instruction and guided meditation. We also explore ways to formulate a personal lovingkindness practice. This workshop includes time for questions, and is suitable for both new and experienced meditators.

- **The Art of Authenticity: Tools for Becoming an Authentic Leader**  
  [WED-PM-02]  
  *Karissa Thacker*  
  Explore the art and science of authentic leadership. Research informs our practice, but living out authenticity in our own unique way is an art. Through interaction and exercises, we examine the four components of psychological authenticity: selves awareness, balanced processing, transparency, and an internalized moral perspective. You learn tools and methods designed to support you in
  - Building trusting relationships
  - Embodying your deepest values in high-pressure situations
  - Making conscious choices instead of reacting blindly
  - Becoming more authentic in all your roles and daily interactions.

- **The Science of Touch: Tangible Happiness**  
  [WED-PM-03]  
  *Deborah Cohen*  
  Come learn how touch contributes to well-being. We examine research findings that demonstrate how touch improves immune functioning, assures healthy early human development, and even helps teammates win games.

  Then we research the benefits of touch ourselves through a partner yoga session. Where touch incites emotion, yoga creates calm and clarity through a focus on direct perception. By design, the touch in partner yoga is cooperative, and offers a great way to experience touch safely and playfully. The yoga poses are accessible for all.

Open Programming

4:15–5:45 pm  *Gentle Yoga for Positive Psychology*  
5:45–6:45 pm  *Speaker Showcase*  
5:30–7:00 pm  *Dinner*
7:00–9:00 pm  Evening Keynote
Embodied Gratitude: A Positive Approach to the Arts and Humanities
James O. Pawelski and Suzann Pileggi Pawelski
The field of Positive Psychology was founded nearly 20 years ago when Martin Seligman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and others observed that psychology focused much more on pathology than on well-being. Today, there is a similar overemphasis on “ill-being” throughout much of the arts and humanities. This presentation will introduce the nascent field of the positive humanities, which calls for an explicit emphasis on well-being to balance current approaches in literature, music, art, movies, philosophy, history, religion, and other cultural domains.

A strategic collaboration between the positive humanities and Positive Psychology can benefit both fields in understanding, cultivating, and measuring well-being. More broadly, this collaboration can benefit humanity by creating new approaches to human flourishing. In this session, we will look at one such approach: embodied gratitude, which integrates somaesthetics (a subfield of philosophy that emphasizes the use of the body for self-cultivation and well-being) and a new, interactive model of character strengths.

Explore the somatic dimension of positive interventions and learn how to practice embodied gratitude interactively in your own relationships.

DAY TWO | Thursday, April 28
8:30–10:00 am  Conversations on Wholebeing
An Open Panel and Audience Dialogue
Moderated by Tal Ben-Shahar
Pulling together diverse perspectives on wholebeing and embodiment, this forum serves as a broad wrap-up of the ideas presented throughout the summit. The diverse perspectives represented on the panel include

- Neal Mayerson, founder of the VIA Institute on Character: character strengths
- James O. Pawelski, founding director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Master of Applied Positive Psychology program: philosophy and the humanities
- Edi Pasalis, Director of the Kripalu Institute for Extraordinary Living: mind-body and yoga
- Megan McDonough, CEO of Wholebeing Institute: leadership/organizational culture.

Bring your questions and prepare for a lively and comprehensive discussion.
Day Two Morning Workshops 10:15–11:30 am [choose one]

- **Embodying Your Best Story: Positive Psychology and Narrative Practices**  
  **[THU-AM-01]**  
  *Margarita Tarragona*

  Stories are not just told or written—they are lived and embodied. This experiential workshop invites you to explore your life story through the lens of well-being and happiness. We look at ideas from two different disciplines: narrative practices and positive psychology, both of which focus on what works well in people’s lives, including personal agency, creativity, strengths, and intentional behavior.

  Narrative psychology proposes that our stories allow us to create meaning from our experiences—the ways in which we narrate life events have a powerful impact on our thoughts and feelings, our relationships, and our identities. We can construct stories that limit us and make problems bigger, or stories that expand us and generate new possibilities. Narrative practices strengthen our efforts to be who and how we want to be.

  Come explore the role that various components of well-being play in your life, and identify personal stories that strengthen your preferred identity.

- **Move2Love: A Positive Fitness Experience**  
  **[THU-AM-02]**  
  *Elaine O’Brien*

  Move2Love, a group dance exercise experience, began in the early 1980s, as a program to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse. More than 20 years later, this award-winning methodology has contributed to individual and community flourishing by priming positive emotions, engagement, relationships, and meaning in motion. The program of easy-to-follow, uplifting rhythmic movement enhances fitness, increases mindful movement, builds community, cultivates character strengths, and inspires a state of flow.

  In this session, we explore Move2Love through the theoretical, empirical, and experiential lenses, including

  - An experience of rhythmic group dance fitness
  - The powerful transformational benefits of embodying appreciative movement
  - Key concepts in the sciences of positive psychology and kinesiology, the psychology of human movement
  - How Move2Love relates to the VIA Institute’s work on character strengths, and the Wholebeing Institute’s SPIRE principles (Spiritual, Emotional, Psychological, Intellectual, Physical, and Relational).
• **Gratitude in Action: The Power of a Virtual Gratitude Visit**
  
  **[THU-AM-03]**
  **Daniel Tomasulo**
  
  The gratitude visit is one of the best-known positive psychology interventions. It’s simple: People are asked to deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had been particularly kind to them, but who they never properly thanked. This exercise has been shown to increase happiness and decrease depressive symptoms for a month afterward.

  But what if the person you wish to thank is unavailable or deceased? When we combine the gratitude visit with the practice of psychodrama—a therapeutic model that has been proven effective for uses ranging from educational role-playing to trauma work—the possibilities for positive change significantly increase. The “virtual gratitude visit” might be used on a fictional or historical character and, based on new research published in the Journal of Positive Psychology, it can even be done with God.

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**Open Programming**

**12:00 – 1:00 pm Let Your Yoga Dance for Positive Psychology**, with Megha Nancy Buttenheim

**12:15 – 1:15 pm Speaker Showcase**

**11:30 am – 1:30 pm Lunch**

**1:30 – 2:15 pm Afternoon Keynote**

**The Connection Between Yoga and Embodied Positive Psychology**

**Edi Pasalis**

Explore the connection between yoga and embodied Positive Psychology with Edi Pasalis, Director of the Kripalu Institute for Extraordinary Living. A decade of rigorous research by Institute-affiliated scientists from leading academic organizations is demonstrating the powerful role of yoga in the embodied empowerment of full potential. Edi shares their key findings, along with inspiring stories of individuals and communities who are achieving radical positive change through the transformative wisdom and practice of yoga.

**Day Two Afternoon Workshops 2:45 – 3:45 pm [choose one]**

• **Breathe Your Way to Well-Being**
  
  **[THU-PM-01]**
  **Janna Delgado**
  
  The breath is a powerful tool to enhance peace of mind and well-being. By regulating our breath, we can access greater states of calm and create long-term stress resilience. Studies show that breath regulation can even change our nervous system.

  Come learn the benefits of mindful breathing and tips on how to use the breath as a tool for self-care in daily life. We also look at the physiology of breathing and the connection between optimal breathing and well-being.
• Stalking the Gaps: Embodied Spirituality and Repair of the World
  [THU-PM-02]
  Maria Sirois
  Thomas Merton wrote, “There is always a temptation to diddle around in the contemplative life, making itsy-bitsy statues.” There is no need for this and no time. This world is ready to be stalked, seen, and experienced, in all its extravagant beauty and horror. It is in that stalking, that willingness to participate fully in the presence of life as it is, that we become fully and truly alive, in spirit, in body, and in heart.

Join inspirational speaker and positive psychologist Maria Sirois as she reminds us of those moments when all is invigorated, when our spirit is enlivened and our body awakened. It is those moments that bring significance and meaning to our lives, a sense of consequence that not only repairs that which is rent within us but inevitably brings repair to the surround of our days. Through introspection, small-group dialogue, and large-group conversation, we

  o Remember moments of awe, absurdity, suffering, and meaning
  o Investigate aliveness within ourselves as the doorway to the pursuit of meaning
  o Connect that inner wisdom to the research on and practice of mindful presence
  o Create a template for inquiry that elevates brain health, heart health, and a sense of the body as something far more than a collection of bones, cells, and nerves.

• The Grace Garden of Hearts and Souls
  [THU-PM-03]
  Megha Nancy Buttenhiem
  For 20 years, Megha has brought the Grace Garden of Hearts and Souls, her signature movement meditation, to thousands of students and trainees. Moving through the Garden is particularly beneficial for students of Positive Psychology because it embodies the teachings of compassion, empathy, and kindness. The Grace Garden meditation not only broadens and builds positivity, it also builds community and connection in a unique, beautiful way, and acts as a gentle yet powerful inquiry into the nature of Grace as divine, unmerited benediction.

Combining the practices of visualization, meditation, journal writing, co-listening, and quiet movement, we

  o Embrace our vulnerability, tenderness, and worthiness
  o Experience a deep bond with fellow participants, without words
  o Learn what it means to give from heart and soul, and discover the true yoga of receiving
  o Understand compassion in a new way
  o Explore ways to serve the Grace Garden forward.

Bring an open heart and prepare to dive into embodied Grace.

Open Programming

4:15–5:15 pm Gentle Yoga for Positive Psychology
5:45–6:45 pm Speaker Showcase
5:30–7:00 pm Dinner
7:00–9:00 pm  Evening Keynote

**Becoming True: What Our Bodies Teach Us About Authenticity**  
*Maria Sirois*

We’ve all had the experience of receiving a message from the body—a wave of emotion, a physical symptom, or a flush of heat. And we have also had the experience of our bodies taking over, bringing us into the deepest experience of what is true—through a shriek of joy, an overwhelming weakness that brings us to our knees, or a powerful ache in the heart or the gut.

The body has much to teach us about what is true and good for us, if only we care to learn. In this workshop, we explore what we mean by authentic living and how to listen to the body with a playful heart and an open mind in order to build a stronger sense of self. The session covers

- What authenticity means from a whole-being perspective
- Physiological reactions and their mental/emotional correlates
- Listening skills for interpreting communication from the body
- The benefits of play for increasing our authentic expression.

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**DAY THREE | Friday, April 29**

9:00–10:00 am  Morning Keynote

**Prioritizing Positivity**  
*Barbara Fredrickson*

What does it mean to prioritize positivity, and how can it help you maintain life balance and improve your mental and physical health? In this keynote address, Barbara Fredrickson shares recent research that she and Dr. Lahnna Catalino have conducted on this concept, and explains how it’s different from merely valuing happiness, which can backfire. People who seek positivity, by habitually taking into account their potential happiness when organizing their everyday lives, may be happier. Putting ourselves in situations in which we are likely to experience positive emotions can reap ongoing, life-sustaining rewards.

10:00–11:30 am  Closing Session

**Enlivening the Next Steps**  
*Megan McDonough*

Having a transformational experience (also known as the “retreat high”) does not ensure sustained change. In this closing keynote, Megan McDonough takes you through steps to help you integrate your learning, looking at what you’ve received throughout the summit and selecting the seeds to sow upon your return to “real life.” You take away a solid structure to support and maintain growth over the long haul, by

- Savoring the week in review and consolidating gains
- Connecting with support within the community for accountability
- Creating a plan of action to sustain change when you return home.