Science of a Meaningful Life
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Happiness:
(Peterson, 2006)

1. Hedonic treadmill

2. Flow

3. Meaningful life
What IS “a meaningful life”? 
Jen: “wishing to establish one’s own character, also establishes the character of others.”
8 Tips for A Meaningful Life

- Optimism: Think positively
- Mindfulness: Attend without judgment
- Connection: Engage, make and keep friends close
- Gratitude: Savor, appreciate, and be thankful
- Compassion: Care, forgive and help those in need
- Kindness: Share and cooperate
- Play: Just for fun!
- Awe: Elevate and inspire
Why is this important for teachers and students?
Self-Compassion (Neff, 2011)

• The practice of quieting the inner critic, replacing it with a voice of support, understanding, and care for oneself
3 Components of Self-Compassion  
(Neff, 2011)

- **Self-Kindness** vs. Self-Judgment

- **Common Humanity** vs. Isolation

- **Mindfulness** vs. Over-identification
Benefits of Self-Compassion  
(Neff, 2011)

- **Reductions in:** Anxiety, depression, stress, perfectionism, body shame, fear of failure
- **Increases in:** Life satisfaction, happiness, self-confidence, optimism, curiosity, creativity, gratitude
- Greater intrinsic motivation, desire to learn & grow
- More likely to try again when fail
- More conscientiousness
- Greater personal responsibility
- More likely to apologize
- Greater compassion & empathy for others
- More forgiveness of others
3 Practices of Self-Compassion (Neff, 2011)

• Talk to yourself as you would a best friend

• Self-squeeze

• Breathe-in, breathe-out compassion
Gratitude  (Emmons, 2007)

• Savor, appreciate, and feel thankful for the positive aspects of life, particularly those resulting from the actions of other people
Benefits of Gratitude

• Physical, psychological, & social benefits (Emmons, 2007)

• Middle school students who practice gratitude (Froh, 2008):
  – Higher levels of optimism
  – Increased life satisfaction
  – Decreased negative feelings
  – Greater satisfaction with school
Gratitude Activities

• Gratitude journals

• Gratitude letters

• Gratitude classroom calendar
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Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.

-William James