

SPOTLIGHT

Workshop 'Being a Role model'



In our day-to-day lives, we are constantly influenced by others and have an impact on them as well, often without even realizing it. In some roles that you have, if you want it or not, you are a model for others. One example we see at SCOPE is student mentors who guide and teach younger students. Being a role model can be challenging for new teachers or student mentors as they are still navigating their own learning journeys.

Recognizing this, SCOPE organized a workshop to help student mentors better understand their roles as role models, providing a space for sharing experiences, gaining insights, and reflecting on personal development. As a role model, you (hopefully) want to transfer your qualities and strengths to others, which makes it important to dive into the positive aspects of your role. Therefore we encouraged mentors to acknowledge and build upon their existing strengths. This shift in perspective proved to be inspiring: the student mentors were already doing much better than they had thought. It built confidence that they could be the role model they wanted to be and it showed that many positive characteristics were probably being transferred to their students.

Emphasizing the positive not only boosts motivation and confidence but also makes the process more enjoyable. While it's common to fixate on the next goal or improvement, taking time to celebrate and appreciate progress is equally important. Positive psychology underscores the significance of nurturing the positive aspects of our lives. Next, you'll find some tips and exercises to experiment with this approach on your own.

Success list

Start and keep a list of things that are going well
> shifts your attention to the positive

Questions

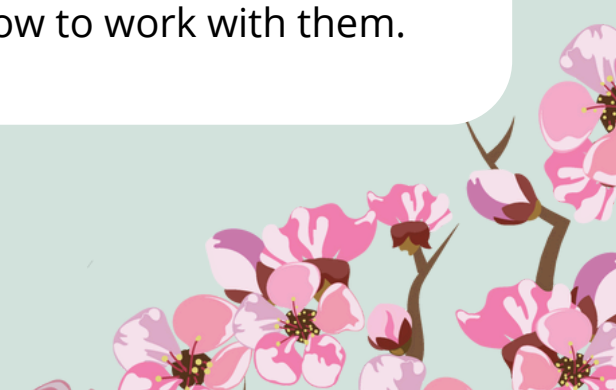
Questions to ask yourself:
What is already going well? Why is it going well? How can I do this more often? And how can I bring more of this into my life?

Compliment

Give someone a fun compliment

Character Strengths

Take the VIA Character Strength test (free), which highlights the strengths that we currently have and gives you insights on how to work with them.



AGENDA/EXTERNAL EVENTS

Twice/Month [Groningen BlaBla Language Exchange](#)

May 10 [Late Night met Splinter](#) (Live talk show, Dutch event) @ Forum

May 17-10 [Bourgondisch Bernoulli](#) (Food truck festival) @ Bernoulliplein Groningen

May 22 [De grote machteloosheid](#) (Talk, Dutch event) @ Forum

May 24-26 [Terug naar het begin](#) (Music + art festival) @ Gemeente Eemsdelta

Ongoing group [Mindfulness-based stress reduction](#)

Weekly - signing up is required

[USVA Courses](#)

Click on the
hyperlinks for
further readings

▶ Insight: Toxic Positivity?

Acting from your strengths or thinking positively about your development can be helpful, but the risk exists of positivity getting toxic: it denies an emotion and forces us to suppress that emotion (Goodman, 2022).

For example, you are kind of angry because you failed your exam, and someone says: 'Everything happens for a reason'. Positivity gets toxic when:

- Someone gets no support, understanding, validation or compassion when someone needs it.
- People are ashamed if they get the feeling that their emotions are not justified, or if they are not happy or positive enough.
- It denies the reality as we perceive it.
- People are told that all negativity in their lives is their own fault/responsibility.

'Ugh, indeed, I understand that you are angry because of failing the exam' would be the preferred non-toxic reaction.

Often, we even tend to act in a toxic positive manner towards ourselves. We can tell ourselves *'Just smile', 'I have so much to be grateful for', or 'Others have it worse'*.

How can you address toxic positivity and handle it in a more constructive manner?

On the next pages, you will find 2 inspiring exercises to reflect on toxic positivity.

Make affirmations work

Instead of the 'positive' affirmations, such as 'I am worth it', you could try to transform them by linking them with your core values. First, you will find out your core values (or you already did during one of our workshops) and answer the following questions:

- How do my values affect my daily life?
- On which values do I spend most of my time and energy?

To make a certain affirmation credible, try these questions:

- What do I want to believe?
- Do I have the feeling this affirmation is possible?
- How can I adjust my affirmation so that it would be more credible?

As a tip, using words as 'possible', 'could be' and 'try' help you to make an affirmation more credible: 'I will try to be worth it' sounds more credible than 'I am worth it'.

Flip your happiness-driven life into a value-driven life

It might be helpful to reflect on the following differences:

Happiness-driven	Value-driven
You are only occupied with things, ideas, activities and people that make you happy	Knowing which things, ideas, experiences and people you value in life
You follow the right way to happiness, even if you don't want to.	Knowing your values motivate and lead you in your way through life
All painful and negative thoughts are a threat to your happiness and need to be eliminated	Your pain, complaints and negative feelings point at your values and can be accepted
Everyone that complains, disagrees or is struggling, is a threat to your happiness	You can choose your relationships based on your values and acknowledge that those relationships are not always simple and good.
Everyone that strives for happiness will be happy. If you are not happy, it's your lack of effort.	Life according to your values will lead to happy and difficult moments. These exist at the same time.

Who we are

How do you make sure to enjoy learning, not just now, but throughout your career? With SCOPE (expertise centre for personal development), we hope to contribute to a generation of happy students. Therefore, we create innovative educational activities in which you increase your self-knowledge and experience the importance of reflection. To illustrate, we provide workshops on values (what do I find important in life?), goals (how can I achieve my personal goals?) and balance (what gives and what takes more energy?). For more information, take a look at our website (rug.nl/scope).