

Chapter Three

Fortology - building a fortress of theory

*“The positive always defeats the negative:
Courage overcomes fear,
Patience overcomes anger and irritability,
Love overcomes hatred”
(Swami Sivananda Sarasvati, 1965).*

Introduction

Chapter three explores the historical developments in the field of positive psychology and supplies various important definitions in looking at fortology. The research is placed within the theoretical field of positive psychology with a focus on fortology. This chapter sets the research within the theoretical sphere on both a national and global level. The theoretical chapter then continues to address the development of three important theories within the field of fortology, in order to build a “fortress” of theory. The work of Seligman (1999), Csikzentmihalyi (1999; 2005) and Strümpfer (1995) are reviewed. The writings of other theorists are discussed as they relate to the main theoretical topics. This constitutes the public narrative of the research. The concept of resilience is explored as it pertains to the research question.

The theoretical point of departure for this study focuses on the perspective of fortology (Strümpfer, 2005). Fortology, also known as psychofortology or positive psychology, has been developing over a period of two decades and much literature is being published in this field (Snyder & Lopez, 2005; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002).

The developments in fortology influence psychology in theory and practice, and have implications for counselling and psychotherapy as well. Ryff and Singer

(1996) propose a model for psychological well-being, which is applied in Fava and Ruini's (2003) Well-Being therapy. My interest is drawn to this contribution of the practical implementation of this perspective because I, as researcher, am also working as a practitioner.

The concept of fortology

For the international reader, it is important to note that '*fortigenesis*' (*fortology from the Latin 'fortis' = strength*) is a South African concept, introduced by Strümpfer (1995) to broaden Antonovsky's (1979) concept of '*salutogenesis*' and to provide an antonym for pathology (Strümpfer & Mlonzi, 2001). Just as Antonovsky is hailed as the father of salutogenesis (Lindström & Eriksson, 2005), so then is Strümpfer recognised as the father of fortigenesis (fortology).

The concept of well-being is related to a broader worldview or social discourse of vitality. Here a broader social context of health and wellness is gaining popularity through phenomena such as health magazines and vitality programmes.

This study follows the development of the field and integrates relevant concepts, including: a shift in approach both globally and nationally, a historical overview of fortigenic versus pathogenic paradigms and the origins of fortology.

A shift in perspective both globally and nationally

An important question that has to be addressed is the issue of why an international and national shift in approach is occurring towards the study of health and well-being. What has been occurring on a global level to influence such a perspective shift?

I, as the researcher, wonder about the possibility of a paradigmatic shift in the 'Kuhnian' sense actually happening now on a global scale (Kuhn, 1970). But

such an idea will possibly only be reflected on *post facto*. For the moment, and for the purpose of this study, this change in perspective will be referred to as an approach or perspective, rather than a movement or paradigm (Kuhn, 1970).

Perhaps there is no one single reason for this shift but rather a number of factors or marginal additions that contribute to a general movement towards health and well-being. As I observe this general shift towards health and wellness in our modern day society, I link this to a general shift in the field of psychology as well. This is the general move in psychology from the study of human deficit towards the study of human wellness and strength (Lopez & Snyder, 2003; Strümpfer, 2005).

Globally

With the devastating discovery of the effects of global warming and the greenhouse gasses in the twentieth century, society manifests a tendency towards developing a greater concern for conservation. Organisations such as *Green Peace* gain popularity as they petition and draw awareness to the importance of sustainable living on planet Earth.

Simultaneously, an industry is developing which can be described as the health industry. This being: companies or corporations that focus on making profit by promoting health and wellness. Examples include the emergence of health shops, health magazines, nutritional supplements of vitamins and minerals for sale to enhance your health, as well as the development of gymnasiums where people can train to get fit and healthy. Examples of these include: *Planet Fitness* and *Virgin Active*.

Larger corporations have shifted focus and are gradually moving towards health and wellness, e.g., *Virgin* focuses strongly on *Vitality* and medical insurance companies focus on health and wellness promotion (Benjamin, 2007). *Discovery*

medical aid in South Africa moves to include a vitality programme in their marketing and there is a definitive change in advertising, media and even medical aid structures (Benjamin, 2007).

Even in the petroleum industry advertising and branding is changing to prepare the public narrative e.g., *British Petroleum (BP)* changed their advertising to *Beyond Petroleum* with the accompanying change in symbol. I highlight this change because it reflects such a major shift in the way industry is presenting itself (Benjamin, 2007).



FIGURE 1: BRITISH PETROLEUM

(Wikipedia, 2008).

The above symbols serve to highlight the change occurring in society, specifically at the turn of the century. In the twenties and onwards *BP's* focus was on the petroleum, since the turn of the century, the new symbol places the focus on *BP* promoting green peace as well. These ideas cause me to reflect on these changes and serve to explain to my reader where the perspective or approach of this current study originates.

All of these changes are accompanied by extensive publicity, and serve to move the public narrative towards an awareness of health and well-being (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). Advertising is one of the strong influences in swaying or shifting public opinion (Benjamin, 2007).

On the ideological frontier, modernism is challenged by post-modern ideas and fresh opinions and new ways of thinking about reality. The theoretical concepts of

deconstruction can be traced in a variety of academic fields. Thus, the stage is set for another development in theory on a global level (Schulte-Sasse, 1986).

A question that I have on this point is to ask whether this is a reflection of mainstream trends or whether the changing world is simply allowing these influences to shape the next century? Perhaps in the following decade answers will begin to emerge on these speculations. It shall become evident on what scale these changes are impacting the world: marginal, mainstream or sweeping changes? I am of the opinion that it is the start of major changes in perspective.

In America, the American Psychological Association elected Seligman as president in 1998, who ushered the APA into the twenty-first century with an interest and focus on positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). Thus, there is a shift in psychology as well (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). Perhaps people seem to be tired of the previous century's focus on symptomatology and illness and feel ready for a perceptual shift towards investigating health and well-being (Coetzee & Viviers, 2007).

Nationally

Nationally, South Africa exhibits a time of transition. With democracy and freedom from apartheid in 1994, our country entered a time of many changes. In psychology we see the emergence of a focus on community psychology aimed at empowering, uplifting and building skills in previously underprivileged communities.

Along with the political discourse of empowerment, the public narrative in South Africa has started to exhibit themes of strength, health and community orientation, where the focus has previously been mainly on the medical fields (Strümpfer, 1990; 2005). Although there are variations, great emphasis was placed on the training of psychologists in the medical perspective, which includes

focusing on symptom identification, such as diagnosis according to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV (Kaplan, Sadock & Grebb, 1994).

With the emergence and rise of a greater focus on community psychology in South Africa, we see psychology developing from a curative model towards a preventative one. Orford (1994, p.154) states that “*an interest in prevention is one of the hallmarks of community psychology.*” This shift in focus from deficit towards empowerment affects our South African society and our psychology as well. Counselling psychologists have advocated prevention for decades, with an underlying focus on health.

It seems evident from the following illustrations, which are advertisements for the African National Congress (ANC), that it is not only the smiling faces which attract attention, but that Mandela’s face (the first president of a democratic South Africa), as well as, the faces of children of all the races of people in South Africa, seem to be representing “A better life for all.” This probably symbolises hope, happiness, health and well-being.



FIGURE 2: A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

(ANC, 2006).

What is of importance here is that the concepts, which we find in positive psychology, such as well-being and health, are noticeably featuring in various discourses in society as well (Strümpfer, 2005). One cannot say which comes first, but there is a correlation across various fields of academia, including the study of psychology, e.g. in community and health psychology.

As on an international level, South African companies also move towards advertising and investment in health and wellness. Parsons (2007) explains that South African business experienced a paradigm shift. Instead of pouring money into technology, by only buying computers and other technologically advanced tools, business is starting to invest in human capital. Parsons (2007) highlights the importance of companies investing in human wellness by launching wellness programmes in the corporations. Thus the wellness of employees is being attended to on a psychological level.

From a critical perspective, it can be argued that these investments promote capitalism and might reduce the individual to a commodity, as Parsons (2007) refers to the concept of 'human capital' rather than 'human resources'. People are therefore equated to capital. Yet it is also important to note that employee wellness has long been ignored in the corporate arena and now stands to gain attention and priority, which can benefit the individual person.

Furthermore, with the spread of the AIDS pandemic, a public focus on preventative health care also becomes more prominent and necessary. Therefore, the public narrative in South Africa moves towards vitality, health, wellness and the prevention of illness (Strümpfer, 2005).

Amidst such powerful global and national factors, it is perhaps a combination of events moving the field of psychology towards recognising a new development in perspective.

Fortigenic vs. pathogenic paradigms – a historical overview

Previous research, done in as early as 1957, includes a diverse scope of work done on the phenomenon of burnout experienced by professionals who work in the care-giving fields (Ford, 1963; Menninger, 1957). It is impossible to account for all the previous research, but various contributions are highlighted according to the applicability to the current topic.

Early research

Most of the research falls within the pathogenic paradigm, in which the health and social sciences have traditionally been functioning. Psychology traditionally addresses the psychopathology and symptomatology of clients, especially after World War II, where psychologists focused on victimology and the assessment and treatment of *pathos* (suffering) (Strümpfer, 2005). Research on the topic of psychotherapists also occurs within the pathogenic paradigm (Glickauf-Hughes & Mehlman, 1995).

Menninger (1957) conducted some early research on the emotional vulnerability of people working in the fields of care-giving and medicine. This study notes the fact that such occupational fields can be stressful and can lead to burnout. Ford (1963) stresses the importance of good training for therapists as a possible factor in preventing the negative symptoms of burnout. Although this study focuses mainly on fortigenic qualities, it is worth having a look at the topic of burnout as well.

The issue of professional burnout is often addressed due to its severity and the impact of this condition, and because many professionals experience symptoms of burnout (Corey, 1991). In order to cope with the demands of the profession certain characteristics and traits are required.

Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman (1995) suggest that good therapists manifest the skills of sensitivity, empathy and awareness of the needs of others. Halewood and Tribe (2003) stress the importance for psychologists to be self-aware, honest and able to be self-reflective and self-critical. It becomes evident that a focus on such qualities in the therapist highlights the impact that the occupational demands can have on the life of the therapist. Developing such qualities will then promote the health and well-being of the therapist enabling the therapist to deal with the occupational demands. Both these studies highlight various personal and interpersonal skills necessary for the functioning of the therapist.

Salutogenesis

The views of Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman (1995) and Halewood and Tribe (2003) can be linked to the salutogenic paradigm in positive psychology. In contrast to the predominant paradigm of pathogenesis, Antonovsky (1979) introduces the construct of 'salutogenesis' derived from the Latin *salus*, health, and the Greek *genesis*, origin, to describe how individuals manage stress and stay healthy and well. Antonovsky defines *health* as "a state of optimal physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity" (Antonovsky, 1996, p.12). He proposes a continuum model of health/dis-ease focusing on encompassing all people along this continuum, while keeping in mind the complexity of the human system (Antonovsky, 1996).

Antonovsky's (1979) sense of coherence is defined as a way of appraising the world, both cognitively and emotionally, which is related to effective coping, health-enhancing behaviours and better social adjustment.

Fortigenesis

Strümpfer (1995) introduces the concept of '*fortigenesis*', and looks at the origins of strength in human experience. Strümpfer (2005) follows the development of

this field and notes that in 1998, Seligman is appointed president of the American Psychological Association (APA) who emphasised the task of positive psychology as being “a beginning to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5). Consequently, the field of psychology sees the publication of various contributions in positive psychology e.g. Aspinwall and Staudinger (2003), Joseph and Linley (2004), Keyes and Haidt (2003), Snyder and Lopez (2005) and Walsh (2001).

Fortology focuses on the strengths and resources that a human being possesses, enabling the individual to cope with the demands of everyday life and stress (Strümpfer, 1995). This model is particularly appropriate in assessing the experiences and resources of the full-time practicing psychotherapist, especially as some of the core constructs in the paradigm includes a sense of coherence, resilience, motivation, meaningfulness and personal coping (Strümpfer, 1995; 1998a; 1998b; 2001; 2007). I therefore believe that there is a good fit between the theoretical perspective and the topic of research.

Psychofortology

In 2002, Wissing and van Eeden introduced the construct of *psychofortology* to postulate a new sub-discipline in psychology. They study the origins, the nature and the manifestations of psychological well-being. They also look at consequent ways to develop and enhance psychological well-being and to develop human capacities.

They describe psychological well-being as seeming “multidimensional with regard to facets of self that are involved (e.g., affect, cognition, behaviour), as well as with regard to the domains of life in which these facets manifest themselves (e.g., intra- and interpersonal, social and contextual, in love and work). A sense of coherence, satisfaction with life and affect-balance are strong

indicators of general psychological well-being” (Wissing & van Eeden, 2002, p.41). Furthermore, they highlight that people differ in their degree of psychological well-being, as well as the particular strengths and patterns of wellness that they manifest.

It can be asked whether there is any theoretical difference between how the terms fortology and psychofortology are used. Or, does fortology overarch psychofortology as an umbrella concept perhaps? Or whether this distinction merely contributes to the generation of theoretical terms? It appears that with the emergence of various new terms, they are often used interchangeably (Wissing & van Eeden, 2002). It is important to note that research in fortology is not merely limited to the field of psychology. In many other disciplines, such as nursing and social work, this approach is also emerging (Coyle, 2002; Saleebey, 1997). For the purpose of this study, I opt to remain within the fortigenic perspective in psychological research, as this perspective fits with the research topic.

In 2003, Strümpfer applied fortigenic thinking to the concept of burnout. This concept is traditionally seen as a pathogenic construct. Strümpfer (2003) shifts the idea of burnout in a more fortigenic direction. He describes the concept of resilience as derived from the verb *resile*, meaning “that when a thing is compressed, stretched or bent, it tends to spring back elastically, to recoil and to resume its former size and shape. In the case of humans, it, firstly, referred to recuperation but it could also include constructive and growth-enhancing consequences of challenges or adversity” (Strümpfer, 2003, p.70).

He postulates psychological variables under the construct of resilience that enhance fortigenesis and thus furthers resistance to burnout. These variables are: engagement, meaningfulness, subjective well-being, positive emotions and proactive coping. These can be attained and developed by personal strategic planning, restorative places, optimal experience (flow), interpersonal flourishing

and Balint groups. The latter is social support groups for professionals (Strümpfer, 2003).

This section of the study highlights some aspects in literature of the historical development in the field of psychology or the path from pathogenesis to fortigenesis.

The origins of fortology

After having considered the shift in perspective discussed above, it is necessary to linger a moment to explain the origin of the field of fortology.

Fortology is a broad concept that is applied to different fields and contexts, such as: social work with Saleebey's (1997) research on strengths, nursing with Coyle's (2002) research on health, and architecture with Pearson's (1995) research on regenerative architecture (Strümpfer, 2005).

Psychofortology (Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002) is a different designation or name for the field of positive psychology. Based on these developments in the field of positive psychology, the current study focuses on the fortigenic qualities (or strengths) of psychotherapists in full-time private practice.

Reviewing some earlier forerunner authors, Strümpfer (2005) in his article titled: *'Standing on the shoulders of giants: Notes on early positive psychology'* highlights that the roots of fortology extend back to ancient times. There is mention of health and resilience in ancient Chinese medicine, ancient Greece, Rome, and medieval Germany, Arabic and Indian cultures. Within the realm of psychology, there are very definite influences to positive psychology dating back to early writers and theorists, such as Rogers (1942, 1951, 1970), Frankl (1964, 1967) and Erikson (1959, 1965) to name but a few. These are the 'giants' referred to by Strümpfer (2005).

Rogers' (1942, 1951, 1970) work on the fully functioning personality and actualising tendency towards optimal functioning, unconditional positive regard and moral responsibility is recognised as one of the forerunners to positive psychology. Frankl (1964, 1967) investigates the will to meaning and self-transcendence, logotherapy and the noölogical dimension of humankind – striving to find overarching meaning in life, while Erikson (1959, 1965) introduces a theory on child and human development in eight stages and focuses some work on interpersonal mutuality. Most psychologists are familiar with these theorists but considering them anew, one can identify the positive concepts introduced to the theoretical field of psychology. All these contributions can be seen as a part of the historical background to the theory of fortology.

Below follows a summary table of the influences to positive psychology within the realm of research in psychology, the original references for the explication of the concepts used in the following table can be obtained in the references list of this study (Strümpfer, 2005, p.25-34):

TABLE 2: EARLY THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTORS TO IDEAS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

DATE	CONTRIBUTOR	SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION
1902-1910/1987	William James (1907, 1987): initially studied medicine, philosopher-psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious experience adding 'zest' to life, assurance of safety and affection towards others • <i>Mysticism</i> similar to Maslow's (1954) 'peak' and Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) 'flow' experiences • A <i>melioristic universe</i> – implies that the world can be made a better place by human effort • <i>Hope</i> = a strenuous mood
1910/1965	Robert Assagioli (1965, 1993): psychiatrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychosynthesis</i> – orientation towards health and giftedness
1921/1971	Carl Jung (1971): psychiatrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychology of Consciousness</i>: Introversion and Extraversion



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total unity with <i>self</i> as the centre, <i>individuation</i> towards <i>self-realization</i>
1922/1939	Lewis Terman (1938, 1939)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Terman Life-Cycle Study</i> – research on gifted children • Marital happiness
1927	Alfred Adler (1927, 1938): psychiatrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Striving for superiority</i> - influencing a person's style of life, socialized into social interest • <i>Creative self</i>
1933/1935	Charlotte Bühler (1935, 1968)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>5 Stage structure of normal human development</i> • She incorporated Goldstein's (1934) concept of <i>self-actualization</i> and <i>creative expansion</i> – change the world through creativity and productivity • <i>Intentionality</i> – an attempt to give meaning to life
1934/1995	K. Goldstein (1995): neuro-psychiatrist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Drive to self-actualization</i> or <i>self-realization</i>
1937	Gordon Allport (1937, 1950, 1958, 1967)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal adulthood and the <i>mature personality</i> • <i>Mastery and competence</i> and <i>patterned individuality</i> • Psychology of <i>religion</i> • The <i>tolerant personality</i>
1938/1962	Henry Murray (1962): initially studied medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organismic study of <i>normal functioning</i> • List of <i>psychogenic needs</i> • <i>Mythology</i>
1942	Carl Rogers (1942, 1951, 1970): humanistic psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fully functioning personality</i> and <i>actualizing tendency</i> towards optimal functioning • <i>Unconditional positive regard</i> • <i>Moral responsibility</i> • Influenced society, management and even national and international politics
1946	Victor Frankl (1964, 1967)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>will to meaning</i> and <i>self-transcendence</i> • <i>Logotherapy</i> • <i>Noölogical</i> dimension of humankind – striving to find overarching meaning in life
1949	The Institute of Personality Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on <i>positive personality functioning</i> by Donald MacKinnon (1978)

	and Research: Berkeley, University of California, USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frank Barron (1954, 1963) studied <i>personal soundness</i> and <i>psychological validity</i> and creativity in <i>highly effective individuals</i>
1950	Erik Erikson (1959, 1965)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theory on child and human development – 8 stages Interpersonal <i>mutuality</i>
1953	Harry Stack Sullivan (1947, 1953)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality results from <i>interpersonal relationships</i>
1954	Abraham Maslow (1954, 1962)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Self-actualization</i> and <i>growth needs</i>. Model of a <i>hierarchy of needs</i> Probably first to use the term <i>positive psychology</i> Human <i>inner nature</i> and active <i>will to health</i> List of <i>being values</i> <i>Spirituality</i> – mystical experiences, transcendent ecstasy and peak experiences
1958	Marie Jahoda (1958)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Positive mental health</i> – 6 criteria
1959	Robert White (1959, 1972)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Effectance drive</i> of novelty The attainment of <i>competence</i> and <i>sense of efficacy</i> = <i>active mastery</i>
1960	Douglas McGregor (1960): management scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Theory Y</i> of people in the workplace, identifying <i>self-direction</i> and <i>self-control</i>
1966	David Bakan (1966)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A <i>psychotheological view</i> of <i>agency</i> and <i>communion</i>
1969/1975	Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1999, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Flow</i> and <i>optimal experience</i> achieved from creativity, meditation, religion, sport, games, hobbies or even reading.
1974/1979	Aaron Antonovsky (1987, 1972, 1974, 1979, 1996): medical sociologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Resistance resources</i> and the model of <i>Sense of Coherence</i> <i>Salutogenesis</i> – the origins of health
1975/1980	Edward Deci (1975, 1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Intrinsic motivation</i> theory of self-motivation, self-determination and competence
1979	Susana Kobasa (1979, 1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Personality hardiness</i> including commitment, control and challenge <i>Existentialism</i> (1977)

From the above table, which gives examples of early contributions until the 1980's, it becomes evident that what is identified as modern day positive psychology originated from various strong historical influences that shifted thinking towards a more positive approach. The summary is not exhaustive and there are possibly more influences not considered here.

Other important early theoretical contributions include the interactional systemic approach (Haley, 1963, 1973; Nardone & Watzlawick, 1993; Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974). The underlying interactional dynamics of this theoretical approach also relate to the concepts of positive psychology, although it is not explicitly stated. The theory is based on the work of Watzlawick, Beaven, Jackson (1967, 1977) and others of the Mental Research Institute (MRI) Palo Alto, California, USA. The work of Bateson (1972, 1979) on the cybernetic paradigm should also be mentioned as it relates to the principles of identifying patterns of interaction and systemic feedback loops. Concepts such as “co-creation” and “co-evolution” entered the world of psychological language (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

The next section of the theoretical chapter moves forward to address the development of three important theories within the field of fortology, as they are appropriate to the research. The work of Seligman (1999), Csikzentmihalyi (1999; 2005) and Strümpfer (1995) are reviewed. This constitutes the public narrative of the research. The concept of resilience is explored as it pertains to the research question.

Current and most recent developments in fortology

Where the 1970s saw an intrinsic focus on individualistic values of personal growth, more recent work shifts to a more extrinsic focus – such as the individual at work or the individual in macro systems (Antonovsky, 1972; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). A shift towards interpersonal flourishing is also developing, where

socialisation-interdependence becomes more of a focus (Ryff & Singer, 2000; Strümpfer, 2005).

For the purpose of this research some of the main, contemporary and recent theoretical contributions in the field of fortology are incorporated. These developments in fortology are included in the current study, where they are applicable to the exploration of the fortigenic qualities of psychotherapists in private practice.

Seligman's positive psychology in the new millennium

Seligman (1999) was appointed president of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998. He is a prominent leader in the field of positive psychology and makes valuable contributions to the field. He says: *"the new century challenges psychology to shift more of its intellectual energy to the study of the positive aspects of human experience"* (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). His contributions are included in the current study due to their importance to the field in general, and also the applicability of his concepts in studying fortigenic qualities.

Seligman (2005) defines the purpose of positive psychology to *"catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst in life to also building the best qualities in life"* (Seligman, 2005, p.3). This quote from his presidential address (1999) is often repeated as a watershed in the development of positive psychology.

He demarcates the field of positive psychology as being on different levels: a subjective level, delineated by positive subjective experiences, such as well-being and satisfaction, flow, joy, sensual pleasures and happiness; and delineated by constructive cognitions about the future like optimism, hope and faith. Then there is the individual level with positive personal traits, such as the

capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, high talent and wisdom. There is also the group level, with civic virtues; and finally the institutional level that move the individual to better citizenship with responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance and work ethic (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2003).

Seligman (2005) notes that prior to World War II the focus of psychology in general was on curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling and identifying and nurturing high talent. But after WWII the focus shifted to treating veteran mental illness and the academic grants were given mostly to studies focusing on pathology. Substantial benefits were gained in the arena of curing mental illness, but the other two areas are vastly neglected, except for a handful of theorists contributing to such topics (Seligman, 2005).

Seligman (2005, p.4) describes: *“(P)psychology is not just the study of disease, weakness, and damage; it also is the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong; it is also building what is right. Psychology is not just about illness or health; it is also about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play.”*

Strengths – a shift of focus

Seligman (2005) highlights that the focus of positive psychology is on discovering human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness. Some of these are courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skill, faith, work ethic, hope, honesty, perseverance, and the capacity for flow and insight. These strengths are important concepts to consider in exploring the fortigenic qualities of psychotherapists in full-time private practice.

The focus of positive psychology in the new millennium is on the prevention of mental illness. This addresses or fulfils the second and third purpose of psychology, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling and identifying and nurturing high talent (Seligman, 1999). This is a refocus of scientific energy in order to understand and build the factors that allow individuals, communities and societies to flourish (Seligman, 2005).

This coincides with the general public trend of moving towards health and wellness in various areas of the public domain, as well as various areas of scientific study. It will most likely become evident in the future whether this is a mainstream shift or limited to marginal areas.

Furthermore, Seligman (2005) notes that as a focus on preventative strategies and the concepts of positive psychology integrate there could also be an added benefit of improved physical health as mental health is promoted. His presidential initiative intends to build the infrastructure and fund the research for growth in the profession of positive psychology (Seligman, 1999). Various scholarships and funding for research projects are made available to both young and more established researchers in the field.

Seligman (1999, p.562) concludes his presidential address by stating that:

(P)sychology is not merely a branch of the health care system. It is not just an extension of medicine. And it is surely more than a tenant farmer on the plantation of profit-motivated health schemes. Our mission is larger. We have misplaced our original and greater mandate to make life better for all people- not just the mentally ill. I therefore call on our profession and our science to take up this mandate once again as we enter the new millennium.

Progress in the field of positive psychology

In 2005, Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson published an article to review the progress made in the field of positive psychology. In it they discuss the CSV – the classification of character strengths and virtues – as a positive complement to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This recent contribution, as well as many books and articles (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Joseph & Linley, 2004; Keyes & Haidt, 2003; Snyder & Lopez, 2005; Walsh, 2001), fuel the current development in the field of positive psychology. Annual summits are launched (Third Annual Positive Psychology Summit, Washington DC, USA, Oct, 2004; European Network of Positive Psychology, Italy, July, 2004), networks founded (Positive Psychology Centres at University of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, Claremont Graduate, USA), websites (www.positivepsychology.org/; www.apa.org/science/positivepsy.html) and courses created and therapeutic interventions researched within the field (Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005). Some of these therapeutic models include the work of Ruini and Fava's (2009) well-being therapy, Rashid's (2009) positive interventions in clinical practice.

The CSV describes and classifies strengths and virtues that enable human beings to thrive. It proposes six virtues, which are endorsed by almost every culture in the world:

- Wisdom - cognitive strengths for the acquisition of knowledge;
 - courage - emotional strengths for the exercise of will to accomplish goals;
 - humanity - interpersonal strengths for tending and befriending others;
 - justice - civic strengths for healthy community life;
 - temperance - strengths that protect against excess; and
 - transcendence - strengths that connect to the universe and give meaning
- (Seligman et al., 2005).

Under each virtue various strengths are identified:

- Wisdom includes
 - creativity (novel and productive ways to do things),
 - curiosity (taking an interest),
 - open-mindedness (thinking through and examining),
 - love of learning (mastering new topics and skills) and
 - perspective (providing wise counsel);

- courage entails
 - authenticity (speaking the truth),
 - bravery (not shrinking from threat),
 - persistence (finishing what was started) and
 - zest (approaching life with excitement);

- humanity refers to
 - kindness (doing favours and good deeds),
 - love (valuing close relations) and
 - social intelligence (being aware of others' feelings and motives);

- justice includes
 - fairness (treating all people the same),
 - leadership (organizing group activities) and
 - teamwork (working well as a group member);

- temperance involves
 - forgiveness (forgiving wrongdoers),
 - modesty (letting accomplishments speak for themselves),
 - prudence (being careful about choices) and
 - self-regulation (regulating what one does and feels);

- while transcendence refers to
 - appreciation of beauty and excellence (noticing and appreciating beauty everywhere),
 - gratitude (being thankful),
 - hope (expecting the best),
 - humour (liking to laugh and tease) and
 - religiousness (having a coherent belief about meaning and higher purpose)

(Seligman et al., 2005).

The explication of these concepts as found across all cultures promotes a process of generating new terminologies but also pays attention to deepening the theoretical foundations of this field of study. There must be a focus on building out theoretical frameworks and models for the foundations of this perspective.

Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow and optimal experiences

Csikszentmihalyi (2000) is closely associated with the development and promotion of positive psychology, since Seligman's presidential term (1998) at the APA at the turn of the century (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). He is an associate, colleague and co-researcher to Seligman and is considered a very prominent contributor and researcher to the development of the field of positive psychology. Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) model of flow and optimal experiences was broadened to include the concepts of flow at work (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). His research institute in Italy is continuing with various important research projects in the field, and is becoming known as the new "Milan group" (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). This highlights the development of positive psychology, not only in America but also in Europe and elsewhere. This trend is developing in South Africa as well (Strümpfer, 2005;

Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002). For the above reasons, the work of Csikszentmihalyi (2005) is reviewed in the current study.

Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2005, p.89) ask, “*what constitutes a good life?*” Based on the model of flow they answer, “*a good life is one that is characterized by complete absorption in what one does*” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p. 89).

Flow

Flow research and theory comes from studying intrinsically motivated or *autotelic* activity. This is activity, which is rewarding in itself, aside from the end product that is achieved. The research forms an idea of general characteristics of optimal experiences and its conditions. These are very similar across play and work settings.

Conditions of flow include: perceived challenges or opportunities for action that stretch existing skills with a sense of engaging in challenges appropriate to one’s level of capabilities; and clear goals and immediate feedback on progress made (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). Under these conditions experience unfolds from moment to moment and the person enters a subjective state of full-capacity, characterised by the following: intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the moment, merging of action and awareness, loss of reflective self-consciousness, a sense that one can control one’s actions, distortion of temporal experience and experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005).

This state is dynamic equilibrium and entering flow depends on having a balance between perceived action capacities and perceived action opportunities. Flow research continues to study optimal experiences in play and work environments and accentuates *interactionism*, which is the dynamic system composed of

person and environment, as well as the interactions between these (Magnusson & Stattin, 1998).

Optimal experiences

According to the flow theory, the quality of a person's experiences is influenced by the subjective challenges and skills, not the objective ones (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). The defining quality of flow is intense concentration, and a person *enters flow* when attention is focused in the present by the structural conditions of the activity against the backdrop of previous experience – past interests will direct attention to specific challenges. *Staying in flow* requires that the person can hold attention to the activity and stimulus.

“The flow state is intrinsically rewarding and leads the individual to seek to replicate flow experiences; this introduces a selective mechanism into psychological functioning that fosters growth” (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p. 920). Therefore the teleonomy of the self is a growth principle, the flow experience is a force of expansion in relation to the individual's goals and interests.

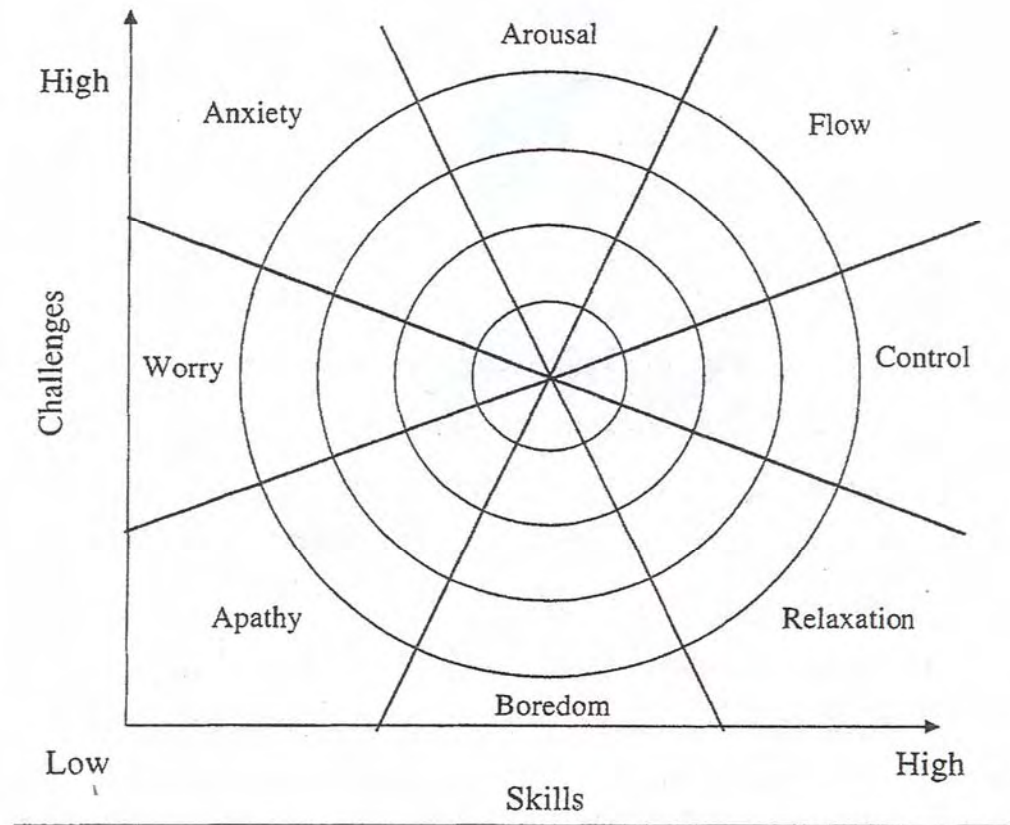


FIGURE 3: CURRENT MODEL OF FLOW STATE. Flow is experienced when challenges and skills are above average and increase in intensity, as shown by concentric circles (Reproduced from Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2005, p. 95).

Flow research is applied in various fields and its relevance is noted in applied settings, such as the work environment – to assist people in finding flow at work. Flow research is also explored at schools, like Montessori teaching and in occupational therapy (Kahn, 2000). The most direct application of the principle of flow is in psychotherapy, in transforming the structure of daily living towards more positive experiences (Della Fave & Massimini, 1992). In one of the latest books edited by Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006), the most recent research on matters of well-being and personal happiness are brought together, looking at what makes life meaningful.

Strümpfer's fortigenesis – the strengths perspective

As previously mentioned Strümpfer (1995) is recognised in this study as the father of the concept of fortigenesis. Strümpfer (2006b) postulates in *The strengths perspective: fortigenesis in adult life*, that there are four assumptions of his strengths perspective, which he explains. Firstly, that there are two continua, one of mental illness and one of mental health. The process of fortigenesis moves an individual towards more or less strength on these continua. Secondly, suffering, struggles and challenges are an inherent part of the human condition. These are caused by inordinate demands. Thirdly, strengths can allow the individual to negotiate and resile these demands, even harness them towards flourishing. Fourthly, there are also experiences that are purely positive which result in joy, meaning, growth and flourishing (Strümpfer, 2006b).

It is important here to note that Strümpfer (2006b) does not deny the negative experiences of life, but rather places these experiences within the broader approach of the fortigenic perspective. Opposing this perspective, the criticism of positive psychology is often along the lines of, 'it focuses only on happiness and is out of touch with the dualities of life' (Handler, 2006). Yet, it is evident that fortigenesis as an approach is acutely aware of the process and function of negative emotions. This is especially seen in the individual process of developing fortigenic qualities. Often the experience of negative emotions is, in fact, pivotal in developing strengths (Strümpfer, 2005).

Strümpfer (2006b) continues to discuss various themes within fortigenesis that are of importance: subjective well-being, quest for meaning, thriving/flourishing and interpersonal flourishing. These themes are briefly reviewed in the following section, as applicable and useful to the research topic (Strümpfer, 2006b).

Subjective well-being

This concept is of primary concern to fortigenesis and is divided into a state of *hedonia* and *eudaimonia*. In hedonia, subjective well-being is hedonic enjoyment, to attain pleasure and avoid pain. But with time, adaptation takes place and hedonia is transient. Eudaimonia is defined as a state of flourishing human potential at the highest level (Strümpfer, 2006b). This includes: justice, generosity, temperance, human rationality, practical wisdom and values. Strümpfer (2006b) relies on the ideas of Ryff (1995) who developed a synthetic model of eudaimonia consisting of six components: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth (Ryff, 1995). Strümpfer (2006b) highlights that the two concepts of hedonia and eudaimonia are, in fact, both part of subjective well-being.

It appears that the characteristics of subjective well-being are related to both personal traits and social interactions. The elements of subjective well-being lead to a sense of emotional balance in the life of the individual (Strümpfer, 2003). According to the work of Compton (2005) people with a sense of subjective well-being tend to have more positive social relationships and are often more extroverted, they are seen as having found equilibrium with other people (Compton, 2005). They balance meeting the demands of others with the demands in their own lives and this process is mutually reinforcing. The cycle of subjective well-being has the effect of enhancing purpose and meaning in life, as it leads to the belief that life makes sense (Compton, 2005).

Questing for meaning

A human being's search for significance and meaning as a response to a challenge or suffering is part of fortigenesis and of reaching for mental health (Strümpfer, 2006b). Important areas in the quest for meaning are the person's assumptive world, featuring the *schemas* and beliefs that the person holds

regarding themselves and the world in which they live. This is related to the person's sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979), where the demands from the outside world are perceived as meaningful, comprehensible and manageable.

The will to meaning and the *noölogical* dimension (Frankl, 1967), which is the striving to find overarching meaning and purpose in life, is also important. Strümpfer (2006b) highlights the questing for meaning and discusses positive illusions that occur in human perception when a person holds unrealistic positive views of the self and of control over the environment and the future, which they employ as cognitive adaptation. Strümpfer (2006b) notes that Taylor and Armor (1996) postulate that this mechanism can be employed when people find themselves in a very difficult situation, such as finding meaning in suffering.

Rumination and cognitive processing includes the pondering and thinking about the meaning of an event, in order to make sense of it. One can see this as the person being reflective. Personal ideology, religion and spirituality represent a larger system of beliefs for which the person is even willing to suffer or be ostracised (Strümpfer, 2006b).

Cited in Strümpfer (2003), Pines (1993) describes burnout as developing out of gradual disillusionment in a quest to derive a sense of existential significance from work. People need to believe that their lives are meaningful and that the things that they do are useful, important, and even heroic. People want to feel important in the larger scale of things. This need was historically fulfilled by religion, but work is also frequently chosen as an alternative source of meaning (Strümpfer, 2003). It will be important to explore if and how these fortigenic concepts feature in the narratives of the conversational partners.

Thriving/flourishing

When a person has the strength to rebound from adversity, this is called *resilience*. This is an ordinary consequence, but when unexpected results occur beyond resilience, this is called *thriving* or *flourishing* (Keyes & Haidt, 2003).

Taken from Keyes and Haidt (2003), Strümpfer (2006b) suggests that flourishing is not as extraordinary as previously thought. The assumption is that challenges can also stimulate ongoing growth and strengthen the person beyond his/her previous capacities. Another important component is physical thriving, which is defined as *toughness*. Toughness is the physiological changes that result from stressors that cause the person to have more physiological resilience than before, i.e. they remain healthier. This concept has implications for the public health sector and topics, such as the link to immunology, create exciting options for further research.

Interpersonal flourishing

Strümpfer (2006b) is of the opinion that social well-being is also a very important factor, consisting of acceptance, actualisation, contribution, coherence and integration (Keyes & Haidt, 2003). Without these the person cannot flourish in interpersonal relations. This is similar to the opinions of Ryff and Singer (2000), quoted in Strümpfer (2006b), who describe interpersonal flourishing as an integral part of well-being. According to Strümpfer (2006b) this includes relationships with significant others, as well as core interpersonal emotions, like love, hate, jealousy and shame. People are constantly interconnected to other human beings and relationships are the foundation and the theme of the human condition (Strümpfer, 2006b).

Strümpfer (2003) notes that in the work of Ryff and Singer (1996) they define interpersonal flourishing is having quality ties with other people. Social support

and reciprocity in relationships are important factors in preventing burnout. Relationships act as environmental resiliency enhancing facilitators, buffering against burnout and advancing engagement, but also facilitating reintegration once burnout has occurred (Strümpfer, 2003).

Froh et al. (2007) similarly highlight the importance of quality interpersonal relationships in well-being. They postulate that quality interpersonal relationships predict life satisfaction and increased quality of life, as well as less symptomatology. Persons in close relationships report better physical, mental and emotional quality of life and more adaptive coping resources to stress (Froh et al., 2007). Their research implies that forming and maintaining adequate and rewarding interpersonal relationships is identified as an important component of overall or general well-being.

Taking this one step further, it is essential to explore the integration of interpersonal flourishing in the life of the psychotherapist. Not only personally but also in the therapeutic context of everyday work, the psychotherapist works in and with interpersonal relationships. These concepts are useful in understanding the experience of coping for the psychotherapist in full-time private practice. Beyers (personal communication, January 07, 2010) notes that interpersonal relationships are the most tiring, if dealt with congruently, as is required of the therapist in psychotherapy.

Strümpfer (2003) discusses balint groups, they are a form of social support for professionals. Two psychiatrists, Michael and Enid Balint, were responsible for starting groups for doctors at the Tavistock Clinic in London in 1949 (Balint, 1957). The purpose of the groups is to discuss professional issues and occupational situations and acquire skills from peer learning. The groups consist of ten participants meeting over a period of two years. Balint groups are found to reduce the symptoms of burnout, as well as to prevent burnout in general and increase professional self-efficacy (Strümpfer, 2003).

In another of his most recent articles, Strümpfer (2006a) also explores positive emotions, positive emotionality as a trait and their contributions to fortigenic living. These are also very useful concepts to review with regards to the fortigenic qualities of the psychotherapist in full-time private practice, as the psychotherapist works in an emotional context on a daily basis.

Positive emotions

Strümpfer (2006a) suggests that the research of Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions is valuable to the field of fortology. Positive emotions like joy, interest, contentment, love, curiosity, excitement, wonder, intrigue, challenge, intrinsic motivation and flow; broaden cognition by making the person think more widely to consider more options for action and in the process, the scope of action is also broadened. Positive emotions also build intellectual, emotional, motivational and social resources, which have enduring effects for managing challenges in the future (Fredrickson, 2001).

By and large, there appears to be rather convincing support for a theory that positive emotions broaden and build upward spirals towards improved well-being, as well as undo the lingering effects of negative emotions (Strümpfer, 2006a, p.152).

Positive emotions serve to broaden the momentary array of thoughts and actions that come to mind. For example, joy broadens resources by creating the urge to play, or push the limits and to be creative. This process builds enduring resources, with long-term adaptive effects (Fredrickson, 2001; Strümpfer, 2006a). The resources are durable beyond the effect of the transient emotions.

Various other research studies also substantiate the lasting effects of positive emotions (Isen, 2002; Reed & Aspinwall, 1998). The research implies that

positive emotions are important psychological components that enhance resilience and thereby serve as a type of buffer to the condition of burnout.

It therefore appears that the process of well-being can be seen as an upward spiral, continually building skills that develop the fortigenic qualities of the individual for the long-term. Strümpfer (2006a) continues to explain three variables that contribute to positive emotions. These are humour and laughter, optimism and gratitude.

Humour and laughter

A sense of humour is the ability to discover and appreciate amusing or comic situations and then to express it again by repeating them in a way that brings forth a smile, mirth or even an unrestrained belly-laugh (Strümpfer, 2006a, p.152).

Humour, according to Strümpfer (2006a) gives rise to positive emotions both in receiving and in giving. It also brings relief from painful emotions by allowing people to gain better perspective on disappointing situations or failures. Not wanting to diverge from the point, it is, however, important to note how often the public narrative will include humour in newspapers or comic strips soon after a disaster is reported – is this perhaps a form of coping in a more public domain? Humour is a concept found across all cultures and appears to be deeply human.

Furthermore, it allows people to reinterpret painful situations as of lesser importance. Laughter and smiling are expressions of positive emotions and occur in response to joy-producing situations, but also when tension is relieved after a distressing event.

Optimism

Strümpfer (2006a) relates that Chang (2002) highlights that optimism introduces futurity in the power of possibility. Dispositional optimism is the tendency to expect positive outcomes, even under difficult circumstances. But it is also important to note that optimists tend to act out on their beliefs, thus turning them into self-fulfilling prophecies.

It is important to note that having an optimistic approach focuses on the power of possibility. This awareness of having options can be linked to what Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions refers to as broadening options, which in turn, broadens action possibility.

Gratitude

Gratitude occurs when a person realises or notices that something kind and generous happened to them. There is a pleasant appreciation and sense of wonder because it is not necessarily earned (Strümpfer, 2006a). The benefits of gratitude are a more optimistic view of life and less psychosomatic symptoms.

The concept of gratitude awareness is also often employed in the practical application of the therapeutic context, e.g. using a gratitude journal as technique. This point touches on the therapeutic application of the fortigenic concepts. These qualities are explored and described, but there appears to be benefit in therapeutic application as well.

Strümpfer (2006a) notes that ordinary, healthy people could increase their experiences of positive emotions, thereby making their lives more meaningful and effective. They do, however, need to continue getting regular feedback from other people and remain in touch with reality.

Positive emotionality/affectivity

Positive emotionality is seen as a superstructure of positive emotions, a trait with extensive systematic connections pulling together positive emotional functioning (Strümpfer, 2006a). Positive emotionality is originally called extraversion by Jung (1971) but confusion of meaning occurs both in public narrative and psychology terminology, thus terminology is shifted to positive affectivity or positive emotionality.

A person with high positive emotionality is described as someone who is friendly, interested in others, fond of company, happy, warm-hearted, cheerful, laughs often, is lively, playful and excited. This is conducive to positive emotional experiences. The person has mental and physical resources that assist them to perform productively and they experience individual happiness (Strümpfer, 2006a).

Emotional intelligence

The ability to use positive emotions in a constructive way is seen as intelligence by Salovey, Mayer and Caruso (2002). Payne (1985) first coined this as emotional intelligence, which is a person's capacity to recognise the meaning of emotions and their relationships, and to continue to do problem solving on this basis. People high in emotional intelligence have a deep understanding of their own emotional lives, use these emotions wisely and have the ability to accurately read the emotions of others, as well as the emotional undercurrents of social situations (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 2001; Compton, 2005).

There is a component of empathy inherent in emotional intelligence. Hardy (2005) describes how an individual who has emotional intelligence as a personality trait reflects a firm belief in their ability to perceive, process, regulate and apply emotional information. This strengthens the individual's coping

resources towards resolution of tension and can be seen as a component of resilience (Hardy, 2005).

Positive emotions undo the effects of negative emotions, build resilience and improve well-being (Strümpfer, 2003). This process is also associated with increased dopamine secretion (Strümpfer, 2003; Depue & Collins, 1999). Fredrickson and Joiner (2002), cited in Strümpfer (2006), test the idea that positive emotions undo negative affect. They call it 'the undoing hypothesis' and find support for this. They also suggest that positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being (Strümpfer, 2006).

Another link is drawn to a neurobiological basis in the research of Segerstrom, Taylor, Kemeny and Fahey (1998) who link optimism to higher natural killer cell cytotoxicity and higher numbers of helper T-cells. Later research by Emmons and McCullough (2003) link positive emotions to experiencing fewer psychosomatic symptoms, showing that the person will be able to cope with life better.

Proactive coping

Proactive coping is defined as the accumulation of resources and the acquisition of skills that are not for any particular stressor, but in preparation in general, recognising that stress does occur and that it is important to be well prepared (Strümpfer, 2003).

Proactive coping is beneficial to people in that during a stressful encounter, proactive coping would minimise the degree of experienced stress. If the stressor is tackled early, less coping resources need to be spent in dealing with the stressor. When a stressful event is still approaching there are options that are available to the individual. The individual would carry less chronic stress if stressful events are averted or minimised through proactive coping (Strümpfer, 2003).

Compton (2005) agrees with Strümpfer (2003), and coins the same principle as *positive coping*. He postulates that effective coping has short and long term effects. The short-term effects reduce the burden of stress, while the longer term effects include building resources that inhibit or buffer future stressful challenges.

Vision and thriving

Schwarzer and Knoll (2003) highlight that proactive coping reflects efforts to build up resources that promote personal growth and challenging goals. They identify a component of vision in proactive coping, where demanding situations are seen as personal challenges towards growth, and coping becomes goal management. Proactive individuals are therefore motivated to meet their challenges and are committed to high quality standards (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003).

Epel, McEwan and Ickovics (1998) find that proactive coping leads to psychological thriving, where thriving includes psychological and physical functioning that has been enhanced after successful adaptation to stressful events. Therefore, similar to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, adaptive ways of dealing with stress helps to build more effective coping resources which can be employed proactively in the future (Compton, 2005).

The power of standing still

In life's rush, proactive coping and thriving require that people prioritise activities in their lives according to their values, and according to what constitutes meaningfulness for them. A prerequisite to be able to do this is the art of standing still.

It is necessary to stand still and decide what things are really important and basic in one's life, the things one values most, but it also requires a

certain power to do so... it is necessary to set priorities, not only for a day or a week, but for quite long periods of one's life (Strümpfer, 1983, p.27).

Restorative places

Places that a person grows fond of are the places where the person would go to relax, to calm down or to clear their mind after negative or threatening events. Natural settings are often favourite places, like the ocean as depicted in the below illustration, rivers, forests or a favourite park (Strümpfer, 2003).



FIGURE 4: RESTORATIVE PLACES – THE OCEAN

(Microsoft Word Picture Archive, 2007).

A person can even see an urban setting like his or her own room or a yard as a favourite place. Exploring these restorative places provides the opportunity to experience positive emotions, developing proactive coping and reflection of meaning – all of these activities safeguard against burnout. It is, however, important to reach these places regularly, be it either by a physical visit or mental

visualisation (Strümpfer, 2003). The next illustration depicts such a forest that can be accessed by a daily lunchtime walk.



FIGURE 5: RESTORATIVE PLACES – A FOREST

(Microsoft Word Picture Archive, 2007).

Flow activities

Strümpfer (2003) mentions that *flow* or optimal experiences are an antidote to burnout and a stimulant for engagement. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) describes flow experiences as *autotelic*, as they require a large amount of energy output but provide few conventional rewards. These experiences can be defined as engrossing and enjoyable experiences worth doing for their own sake. Examples can include: mountaineering, rock climbing, creativity, music, meditation, religion, sports, games and hobbies. The requirements for a flow activity are that the person should be thoroughly involved in something that is enjoyable and meaningful. The person should be in control of the activity but not consciously

trying to control the activity. The person feels that their ability matches the opportunity and the challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

Strümpfer (2003) notes that the above-mentioned measures will be applicable to general health and strength as well – a person abiding by such guidelines will experience thriving and flourishing, and from a position of burnout, these measures will facilitate recovery.

Resilience

Strümpfer (2003) suggests that all these above-mentioned psychological variables: subjective well-being, questing for meaning, thriving/flourishing, interpersonal flourishing, positive emotions, positive emotionality/affectivity, emotional intelligence, proactive coping, the power of standing still, restorative places and flow activities; fall under the umbrella of resilience, which advances fortigenesis thus promoting engagement - the antipode of burnout. This work is of importance for the current study, which looks at the fortigenic qualities of the psychotherapist in private practice.

Burnout is described as a work related condition of exhaustion (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2002). According to Schaufeli and Buunk (2002), burnout is characterised by four symptoms: distress in the form of affective, cognitive, physical and behavioural symptoms, a sense of reduced effectiveness and disengagement from work, decreased motivation and dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours. The person experiences frustrated intentions and inadequate coping, which is not necessarily identified in the beginning, but they are pre-conditions and tend to self-perpetuate. This condition can occur in people who do not suffer from psychopathology (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Strümpfer, 2003).

Strümpfer (2003) emphasises the concept of *resilience* (from the verb *to resile*), which means “*that when a thing is compressed, stretched or bent, it tends to*

spring back elastically, to recoil and to resume its former shape. In the case of humans, it, firstly, refers to recuperation but it could also include constructive and growth-enhancing consequences of challenges or adversity” (Strümpfer, 2003, p.70). Resilience is therefore fortigenic in promoting engagement, which prevents or guards against burnout.

Sabin (2006) reviews the most recent developments in the field of resilience research and postulates that the research focuses on the psychological aspects and social influences of resilience. Sabin (2006) found that resilient children were protected by the connections they had to competent and caring adults, self-regulatory skills, positive views of the self and inner motivation. Therefore resilience can be seen as a growth-enhancing factor.

Engagement

Engagement is seen as the opposite of burnout and consists of energy, involvement and efficacy (Strümpfer, 2003). Schaufeli and Buunk (2002) identify eight characteristics of the engaged worker:

- They take initiative and actively give direction to their lives;
- they generate their own positive feedback as encouragement;
- they are also engaged when outside their employment;
- they have values and norms that agree with those of their employing organisation;
- they too become fatigued but it is positive fatigue – tired but satisfied;
- they also can experience burnout, but get themselves out of it again;
- they too occasionally want to do something other than work; and
- they do not suffer enslavement to work (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2002).

Schaufeli, Maslach and Marek (1993) describe how self-efficacy enhances engagement, and therefore avoids burnout, through performance mastery

experiences, vicarious experiences or even verbal persuasions or social influences.

Psychosocial resilience model

Within the field of health psychology Hart, Wilson and Hittner (2006) formulated the psychosocial resilience model. This model of resilience is based on Antonovsky's sense of coherence (1979). Their research postulates that a high sense of coherence enhanced medical well-being. It did this by balancing a profile of psychological assets (protective factors) relative to liabilities (risks), which explains why people with a high sense of coherence enjoy higher levels of medical well-being. The specific protective factors identified in the study are: the experience of positive emotions and an adaptive form of emotional regulation, called the anger control coping style (Hart, Wilson & Hittner, 2006, p.860).

New techniques in recent brain imaging research allow researchers to investigate the link between neuropsychological and cognitive factors and resilience. This is achieved by, for example, looking at working memory and executive functions like problem solving and planning (Sabin, 2006). Resilience in traumatic situations is first considered to be exceptional, but as research progresses it is now seen as "*an especially effective form of normal adaptation*" (Sabin, 2006, p. 6).

Masten (2001, p. 227) calls resilience the "*ordinary magic*", referring to the fact that most people can confront trauma and prevail, and that only approximately one third of trauma victims develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research conducted with the survivors of the 2001 World Trade Centre tragedy in America found that at least one third of the group exposed to severe trauma, are described as being resilient (Sabin, 2006). These individuals portray high levels of self-enhancement, a sense of control over their own lives, they perform familiar roles and routines and appreciated community co-operation. Sabin

(2006) identifies that positive psychology investigates the principle of post-traumatic growth, where a process of suffering can give rise to compassion, wisdom and well-being.

If a person resiles, recovers and surpasses previous levels of functioning, Keyes and Haidt (2003) call this thriving/flourishing or resilient reintegration. Strümpfer (2006a) highlights that there is a genetic role in positive emotionality and resilience, as well as a component of heritability. *“An individual has a genetically determined, characteristic set range of positive emotionality within which feelings of well-being will tend to fluctuate, depending on the environmental influences”* (Strümpfer, 2006a, p.158). Yet, it is still possible to increase a person’s positive emotionality significantly within one’s genetic range.

Biologically based systems

Furthermore, Strümpfer (2006a) relying on the work of Gray (1991) proposes that there are biologically based systems that govern emotional and personality variations. The first is the behavioural-approach system, which organises reactions in the brain. It is associated with an approach to rewards and escape from or avoidance of punishment. The second is the behavioural-inhibition system that responds to conditioned aversive stimuli of punishment, and reacts to the omission of reward. Research findings show that happiness is associated with left-side activation in the brain, although several structures in the brain are interrelated (Strümpfer, 2006a). Thus, the research supports a biological component to positive emotionality.

Gray (1991) draws a link between neurological and psychological findings, saying that a strong behavioural-approach system characterises extraverted personality traits. Thus, persons high on positive emotionality are more sensitive to the provision of rewards and more likely to search for rewards. This may result in enhanced information processing, the desire to excel in order to obtain

rewards, and an increase in positive emotions upon receiving the rewards. The positive emotions again provide the motivation to approach the rewards. It is also found that individuals with more left-sided prefrontal activation may recover faster from negative affect or stress (Strümpfer, 2006a).

Immune response

The left frontal lobe of the brain regulates the functioning of natural killer cells. These cells are responsible for early immune response reaction. Strümpfer (2006a) relates the research study of Davidson, Coe, Dolski and Donzella (1999), who found that higher left-sided, rather than right-sided prefrontal activation, predicted significant higher levels of natural killer cell functioning. Dopamine, a neurotransmitter, affects brain processes that control movement, emotional responses and the ability to experience pleasure or pain. Depue and Collins (1999), cited in Strümpfer (2006a), highlight that dopamine seems to be involved in complex processes concentrated in the left hemisphere with asymmetry in the frontal region. Depue and Collins (1999) show that dopamine is strongly related to positive emotionality (Strümpfer, 2006a).

Strümpfer (2006a) suggests that research in other associated fields is stimulating developments in fortology, and vice versa. In the process, new understanding is gained, and this field of research is propelled forward.

Interpersonal neurobiology

The research of Siegel (2001) can link to the findings of Sabin (2006) as Siegel (2001) states that:

“... interpersonal neurobiology presents an integrated view of how human development occurs within a social world in transaction with the functions of the brain that give rise to the mind. This framework suggests some

basic principles for conceptualizing the essential experiential ingredients that may facilitate the development of the mind, emotional well-being, and psychological resilience during early childhood and perhaps throughout the lifespan” (Siegel, 2001, p.67).

He continues to explain that at the centre of this process lies the integration of neurological and interpersonal processes, while integration is the process whereby secure attachments facilitate and promote psychological well-being (Sykes-Wylie, 2004). Siegel (2001) states that human connections or attachment patterns create the neural connections from which the mind emerges and this could possibly highlight a reflective cyclical pattern of development and resilience.

Interpersonal sharing of emotions is conceptualised by Siegel (2001) as a form of resonance and is the outcome of integration. The vitality, authenticity and resonance that arise from narrative coherence and in attuned dyadic relationships create meaning and connection for the individual. Siegel (2001) proposes that these integrative processes are at the core of psychological resilience. He also suggests that these processes are dynamic and evolving throughout the lifespan of the individual, as the mind may continue to develop in response to emotional relationships throughout life (Siegel, 2001). This exploration of research in the field of resilience is important to the current topic in the way in which this promotes the fortigenic qualities of the psychotherapist in full-time private practice.

The research of Siegel (2001), Strümpfer (2003) and Sabin (2006) discussed in the above section imply that a sound neurobiological link has been found to the development of resilience. Integration on an interpersonal level, or as Siegel (2001) refers to attachment, appears to be one of the pivotal elements of developing resilience in childhood, and also maintaining and furthering resilience towards flourishing and thriving in later adult life.

Genetics

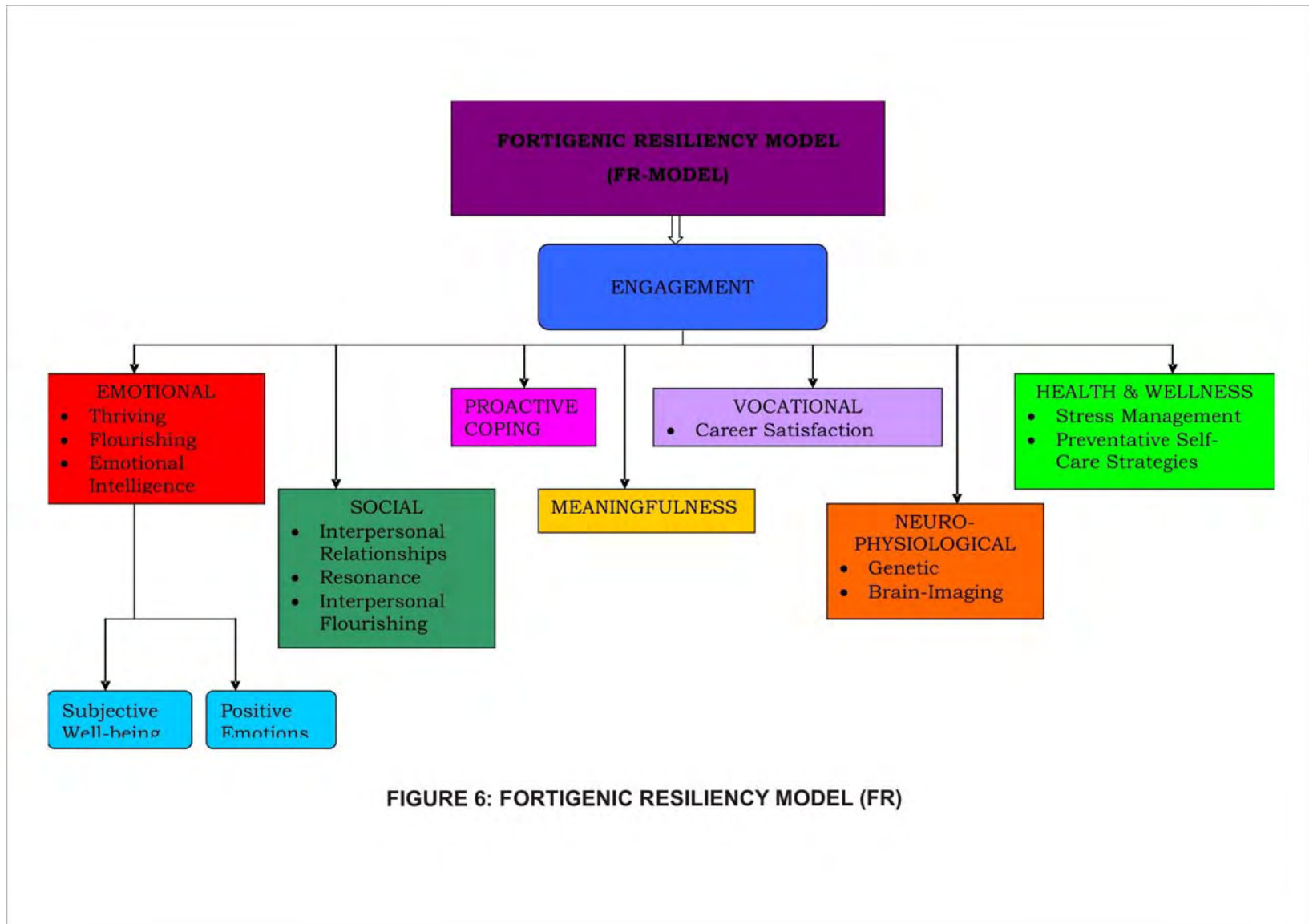
Sabin (2006) highlights that resilience research is currently shifting focus to ask how and why do resilient children develop in such a way? Recent advances in the fields of genetics, psychopharmacology and brain imaging are promoting research into the biological origins of resilience.

This is in accordance with Wilson's (1998) concept of consilience. According to this theory, the convergence of findings from a range of independent fields of research suggests a direction in which academics may understand how the findings of their own work may relate to those from other disciplines. This allows for an interdisciplinary view, which may broaden perspective and promote understanding. Based on this thinking, this section is included in the research study, in order to account for the awareness and inclusion of consilient research in other fields.

Fortigenic resiliency model (FR-Model)

Based on the discussions of the previous chapter and this current chapter, I propose an integrative model (Figure 6) for better clarifying resiliency within the occupational field of private practice in psychology. This model serves to integrate the various theoretical themes of the previous chapters.

The model as proposed is also interactive. Emotional well-being depends on social and interpersonal engagement, while pro-active coping in life is an important ingredient for career satisfaction, leading to preventative and effective management of daily stress and burnout. The interactive link between all these intrapersonal and interpersonal factors is the neuro-physiological connection, contributing to a sense of fortigenesis and meaningfulness.



The fortigenic resiliency model (Figure 6) serves as an overview of the components highlighted in the literature. Engagement is proposed as the antipode of burnout (Strümpfer, 2003). In order to achieve work engagement and therefore occupational resiliency there are various areas, which are of importance.

These are emotional, social, proactive coping, meaningfulness, vocational, neuro-physiological and health and wellness. Within each of these areas there are various important factors, which are summarised in the fortigenic resiliency model. These are explicated more fully in the literature of the previous two chapters.

In considering resilience and fortigenesis, Strümpfer (personal communication, August 1, 2008) suggests that fortigenesis as a strength perspective is a value approach, like a philosophical approach, rather than a global movement. The divisions in different academic fields are falling, boundaries are blurring, and resilience is studied across all disciplines, such as social work, economy, philosophy and medicine, to name but a few. This is important in noting that the research attempts not to be reductionistic but rather integrative and inclusive in nature. Therefore, research from related fields of study are mentioned in this study, as it pertains to the current topic of study.

It is important for researchers to have an approach of integration and synthesis rather than one of seclusion and exclusion (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This is what is of importance to the researcher in studying and reviewing the literature available on topics such as resilience. Wider collaboration would be beneficial in future between various fields, such as education, social work and psychiatry, which are all exploring these concepts.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the theoretical paradigm of fortology is explored. The study follows the development of the field from a historical perspective, paying attention to the global and national shift in perspective. The origins of the field of positive psychology/fortology are acknowledged. The most recent contributions to the field and current research is reviewed and included in the study, according to the applicability of the research to the topic of the study.

Contributions from major theorists like Seligman (1999), Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and Strümpfer (2005) are reviewed and included. These contributions can be seen as public narratives, which are integrated with the research findings of the study.

In this chapter the concept of resilience is also addressed. Resilience is explored as an important principle of fortology. The most recent contributions to the field and current research are also reviewed. These include a neurobiological link that has been found to the development of resilience and genetics (Strümpfer, 2003; Depue & Collins, 1999). The chapter also identifies psychological variables under general resilience, which enhance fortigenesis. These are included according to the applicability of the research to the topic of study.