Healing the Divide Through Wholeness: Holding on to What Makes Us Human

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Abstract

This article focuses on the epistemological and experiential aspects through which we can gather together the fragmented pieces of our reality. I aim to broaden the overarching framework of wholeness in second wave positive psychology (PP 2.0) and argue that healing the growing divide between components of humans, systems, and disciplines must be acknowledged and validated as essential to achieving a more complete wholeness. First, I advocate for expanding our ways of knowing by becoming aware of and embracing multiple dimensions and perspectives. This approach includes listening to the human voice and understanding the human context. It also includes being open-minded and open-hearted in approaching varied ways of knowing. Second, I advocate for broadening the scope of what it means to be human. This includes understanding and validating humans holistically by moving beyond zero-sum, binary categories to consider the value of human paradoxes, limitations, and complexities, as well as appreciating the joining of opposites and the value of brokenness. I then conclude with a few suggestions for future application of these ideas and offer concluding remarks.

It should come as no surprise that the unhealthiness of our world today is in direct proportion to our inability to see it as a whole.

— Peter Senge

This article is an exploration of a more holistic understanding of second wave positive psychology (PP 2.0). It advocates expanding our ways of knowing as well as broadening the scope of what it means to be human.

The above quote conveys an uncomfortable truth. For thousands of years, philosophers have spoken about the importance of the whole and about the spiritual, physical, intellectual, relational, and emotional components that make up a full and fulfilling life. Western scholarship on the issue has for the most part been concerned with the different components of human existence (e.g., mind, body, spirit, and emotions). Over the years, though, these components have drifted apart and left a fragmented world and worldview. In this article, I focus on the epistemological and experiential aspects through which we can gather together the fragmented pieces of our reality. Here, I aim to broaden the overarching framework of wholeness in PP 2.0 and argue that healing the growing divide between components of humans, systems, and disciplines must be acknowledged and validated as essential to achieving a more complete wholeness.

The Cartesian mind–body dualism of the 17th century led to an ideological split between empirical science and theology (Haynes, 2009), and the scientific awakening of the modern era contributed to a positivistic scientism that posited the scientific method as the only legitimate path to knowledge (Mehta, 2011). Modern thought emphasized the values of stability, unity, positivism, linear progression, continuity, and ultimate and universal truths. It argued for

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certainty and predictability, based on formal order, discipline, and hierarchy (Hirt, 2009). Such modern reductionism was reflected in the domination of science and nature as epistemological sources and in the endorsement of "Grand Theories," which were believed to represent all knowledge and universal formulas (Harvey, 1990). In this context, social and traditional structures were perceived to be solid and reliable sources, and society was perceived as playing a central role in defining moral codes, meaning, and values. The self was considered essentialist, self-contained, masterful, and unified; and traditional familial, religious, or cultural practices that reinforced shared values and rituals were believed to maintain the self.

The emergence of postmodernism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries paved the way for a cultural and intellectual movement away from mechanistic conceptions of reality and toward a more nondualistic and holistic view (Haynes, 2009). In addition, the pluralistic and complex postmodern world challenged the existing processes of continuity and socialization, as well as the transmission of traditional patterns (Buxant, Saroglou, & Tesser, 2010). The void left by the collapse of stable structures and binding values challenged people in contemporary societies to construct their own personal beliefs and to address fundamental existential issues on their own. This context also challenged the static, single, and continuous structures of self and society and created a need for a self that is fluid and that constantly comes into being, or "becoming" (e.g., Rindfleish, 2005).

The quality of constant and unfolding becoming echoes Heidegger's (1962) conceptualization of *Dasein* (being in the world) as a unified whole. Such wholeness reflects the happening or movement of life, in which human beings are continually "in progress" of making and remaking themselves (Martínková, 2011) in a dialogical, active, and dialectical relationship with the world (Anderson, 1997; Spinelli, 1989). This co-constitutionality can be illustrated through the metaphor of dance:

> We dance with the world which is dancing with us … the dance is seen as a unity, not as separate entities. The step of the world defines and gives meaning to the leap of the person. The posture of the person defines and gives meaning to the pirouette of the world. (Matsu-Pissot, 1995, p. 41)

In this article, I focus on this essence of wholeness as a way of being in the world, which involves a whole that is more than the sum of its parts, and on the inevitable complexities and contradictions that encompass the delicate dance between human beings and the world in which they exist and operate. When we examine the etymology of the word *health*, we find that the Latin source of the word is *hal*, which means *whole*; capturing this etymological connection, one of the dictionary definitions of *to heal* is *to make whole*. In a similar vein, the Hebrew word *shalem* (i.e., being whole) corresponds with the word *shalom* (peace). In a sense, wholeness involves peace and healing of the divided and fragmented parts of an individual, a system, or society at large. In our current postmodern condition, the concept of wholeness thus appears to require a more complex, holistic, and nuanced view of human experience, one that goes beyond happiness or well-being. What makes life worth living, in spite of the transient nature of human existence, is a critical question that has to be explored through different and complementary angles and disciplines.

If life itself is too complex to be captured by one single discipline, worldview, or outlook, so are the varied ways individuals experience and make sense of it. This idea was the motivation behind a volume I coedited featuring a cross-disciplinary dialogue between the perspectives of positive and existential psychology concerning core issues of human nature, particularly that of meaning in life (Batthyany & Russo-Netzer, 2014). My coeditor and I stated:

Addressing the full range of human conditions, emotions, and concerns, as they are manifested in human motivations of fear of death, alongside the love of life, can deepen our understanding of positive human functioning, flourishing, growth, and mental health and portray "the life worth living" as a whole. (Batthyany & Russo-Netzer, 2014, p. 19)

The perspectives of positive and existential psychology represent important aspects of an indivisible whole and need to be given an equal voice to provide a more comprehensive, balanced, and holistic view of the full spectrum of human experience than either perspective can offer separately.

This idea of broadening and expanding the boundaries of current conceptual and methodological frameworks to construct new frontiers corresponds with recent developments in the PP 2.0 movement. PP 2.0 advocates a dialectical approach that transcends simplistic positive–negative dichotomies (Ivtzan, Lomas, Hefferon, & Worth, 2015; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015; Wong, 2009, 2011, 2017) and moves toward an integration of the "complex interactions between the negatives and positives to optimize positive outcomes" (Wong, 2011, p. 69).

In this article, I propose broadening the concept of wholeness and suggest two central, nonexhaustive approaches to facilitate healing the divide. First, I advocate for expanding our ways of knowing by becoming aware of and embracing multiple dimensions and perspectives. This approach includes listening to the human voice and understanding the human context. It also includes being open-minded and open-hearted in approaching varied ways of knowing. Second, I advocate for broadening the scope of what it means to be human. This includes understanding and validating humans holistically by moving beyond zero-sum, binary categories to consider the value of human paradoxes, limitations, and complexities, as well as appreciating the joining of opposites and the value of brokenness. I then conclude with a few suggestions for future application of these ideas and offer concluding remarks.

Expanding Ways of Knowing: Embracing Multiple Dimensions and Perspectives

Progress in science and technology has led to gradual atomization and fragmentation not only as a sociocultural phenomenon but also within the social sciences with the emergence of subdisciplines (Kumar, 2003). Psychology, for example, is not considered a unified discipline due to increased specialization of knowledge (e.g., Goodwin, 2015). Furthermore, the dominant objectivist reasoning and frame of inquiry adopts analytical lenses that view reality apart—as binary structures and definitions of either–or, black–white, positive–negative, good–bad dichotomies. In this sense, specialization may act as a "double-edged weapon. It ensures a high degree of expertise in a sector of learning but at the same time, it creates conditions of self-imposed isolation from other pursuits of learning … [which] typifies the present day social science scene in academies" (Kumar, 2003, p. 154). In other words, while potentially productive in generating new knowledge, overreliance on this binary analytical approach may hinder grasping the wholeness of reality. Such imbalance is at the root of the disintegrated view that disconnects the person and the context, a phenomenon and the way it is experienced, and the laboratory and the "real world." A fragmented and segmented view may inhibit our capability of making sense of human phenomena, thus resulting in a risk of oversimplification, reductionism, or partial understanding. Therefore, a multiperspective approach to the study of human experience is warranted (Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick, & Wissing, 2011).

Going Back to the Things Themselves: Complementing Big Data with the Human Voice and Context

Paraphrasing Husserl's (1980) words, we need to "go back to the things themselves" (p. 116) to regain an open-minded, open-ended approach to the study of the manner in which human beings experience and encounter the world. In practice, we have distanced ourselves from the "things themselves," being at times attached to preconceptions about reality. The lens we use may thus narrow the things we examine to theoretical conceptualizations and theoretical definitions that analyze and break reality into abstract pieces. Although important for analysis, this lens may prevent us from seeing that spectacular and complex mixture of colors that is our human nature, our reality. Thus, healing the divide at the epistemological level, in our ways of knowing, entails a genuine and respectful dialogue between research traditions, worldviews, perspectives, and disciplines to enable them to join forces and to give each discipline an equal voice. Positivism and empiricism balanced and complemented by phenomenological and constructive approaches enable a richer and more complex understanding, given that, unlike objects, human phenomena are always characterized by individual and cultural differences and values (Wong & Roy, 2017). Constructivist paradigms of phenomenology and narrative/hermeneutic models of knowing are essential for developing a "big tent" view of the subject of personal meaning and meaning making.

Going back to the things themselves does not apply only theoretically and conceptually. It means genuinely listening to the voices of individuals and learning from them what these onceptual understandings of meaning are all about—what they essentially mean and how they are experienced in real life rather than through survey self-reports or laboratory experiments. This activity requires not only a cross-disciplinary approach but also a multimethod one, integrating and complementing top-down, objective positivism with bottom-up analysis of how phenomena are widely experienced in the here and now. A closer investigation of individual worldviews, perceptions, and experiences provides a more holistic and realistic understanding of life situations, complexities, and the human condition. In this sense, qualitative research methods are particularly useful for capturing the richness and complexity of a phenomenon, as their primary interest is understanding how individuals ascribe meaning to or interpret a given phenomenon (e.g., Hodge, 2001; Merriam, 1998). Listening rather than measuring has the potential of revealing "fresh categories of meaning that quantitative studies may not have discovered" (Blieszner & Ramsey, 2002, p. 36). This may enable quantifying subtle humanistic concepts without sacrificing the life meanings of individual participants (Sheldon & Kasser, 2001; see also Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

In line with the importance of taking into account the value of a person-centered phenomenological approach (Wong, 2016), of giving a human face and voice to abstractions, theoretical definitions, and categories, I include in this article excerpts from interviews with individuals who have undergone formative change in their lives, from both clinical and nonclinical samples[2] to illustrate some of the conceptual principles of PP 2.0 and to bring the phenomenology alive. (Following each excerpt, the gender and age of the individual quoted is stated in parentheses, along with whether the excerpt is from a clinical or nonclinical interview.)

Beyond pluralism in and integration of methods and perspectives for investigating human experiences in a nuanced and dialectical manner, another essential point to consider as part of expanding ways of knowing relates to the importance of the context in which individuals live their lives. Just as we should not neglect the individual human voice and face in the mass of big data and numbers, we also should keep in mind that "other people matter" (Peterson, 2006, p.

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[2] For more information, see Moran & Russo-Netzer, 2015; Russo-Netzer, in press; Russo-Netzer, 2017; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2016; Russo-Netzer & Moran, 2017.

10). As this interview excerpt highlights, the central features that makes us human are shared and universal:

> First and foremost it is about being a human being … to remember that the person in front of you is a human being, who has feelings and thoughts and dreams, who is scared and sad and happy, who loves and hates and sometimes gets depressed like you … when I face another person then we can really be in a dialogue as equals, because what happens in many relationships is that we think we are better or not as good as the other person and that has a lot of impact on the dialogue. (Male, 34, nonclinical)

In a broader sense, internal processes do not occur in a vacuum, and we cannot separate consideration of human experiences from the interactions and environment in which they are constantly shaped. This inextricable connection is explicitly highlighted in Heidegger's (1962) account of human existence as the essential and inescapable essence of being human. According to this view, people always experience things in relation to other people (Pascal, Johnson, Dore, & Trainor, 2011). Even when human beings are alone or isolated, other humans become visible by their absence and still remain evident through the humanmade things that surround existence in the world (Heidegger, 1962; Watts, 2001). The surrounding world and the individual self are interconnected and intertwined, reflecting simultaneous modes of the relationship between the human being and the world. The self, thus, is not a static phenomenon but rather one that reflects a dynamic and complex interplay with its surrounding environment (Huitt, 2004) and sociocultural systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

Extensive empirical research findings attest to these assertions, emphasizing that culture plays an important role in individuals' values, assumptions, and needs (e.g., Delle Fave & Bassi, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002) and that well-being concepts may evoke different understandings and manifestations in different contexts (e.g., Datu 2015; Steger, Kawabata, Shimai, & Otake, 2008). One of the central criticisms of positive psychology has to do with its culturally specific conceptualization of well-being, often derived from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) participants (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), presented as generalizable and universally relevant to other cultures (Lomas, 2015). A growing recognition of and sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences (Lomas, 2016) and recent multicultural considerations in the measurement, classification, and application of positive psychology concepts (e.g., see Pedrotti & Edwards, 2014) are encouraging. Yet given that "in many important ways cultures are the expressions of human nature in all its complexity and duality—fears and hopes, cravings and aspirations, selfishness and generosity, cruelty and compassion" (Wong, Wong, & Scott, 2006, p. 1), further attention to cultural aspects and settings, such as those involving minority groups, societal inequalities, immigrants, and non-Western contexts, is needed for a more nuanced understanding of human concerns.

Being Open-Minded and Open-Hearted: Expanding Attentiveness to Varied Ways of Knowing

In order to gain a holistic view, we also need to keep in mind that our current conceptualizations and insights may only reflect a limited and specific perspective on the infinite and complex processes to which we have only partial access. Although challenging, becoming aware of our own set of theoretical and ideological conceptualizations and consciously suspending, or "bracketing," judgment, presumptions, and expectations derived from such previous knowledge is no less important than accumulating new information. Adopting a sense of humility enables us

to remain self-conscious as researchers and practitioners and not take for granted previously held paradigms with regard to human nature and experience. This may provide the conditions for the "opening of ourselves to the phenomenon as a phenomenon" (Keen, 1975, p. 38). While full bracketing is never absolute (Spinelli, 1989), and while we can ever truly understand the inner experience of another person given our own personal and sociocultural biases, applying self-awareness, sensitivity, and attention to our personal knowledge and assumptions (Caelli, 2001; Davidson, 2000; King, 1994; Kvale, 1996) enables us to get closer to understanding individuals' inner world through the intention of gaining a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon being explored (Husserl, 1931; Moustakas, 1994). A fresh outlook on reality, and in particular on the complex and ever-changing reality of our times, requires curiosity, openness, and a sense of "second innocence" (Izzo, 2004)—a reconnection with the childlike, vigorous qualities of zest, wonder, and awe toward the unknown and mysterious in life. In a world of post-truth, relativism, high intensity, cynicism, and productivity, employing not only an open-minded but open-hearted approach appears to be significant in reconnecting and coming into direct interaction with the things themselves.

        Expanding openness and attentiveness to varied ways of knowing may include additional resources that have yet to gain sufficient or legitimate attention. For example, awareness of synchronicity (happenstance or meaningful coincidence) (Guindon & Hanna, 2002) or intuition (e.g., Heintzelman & King, 2013) may provide valuable information with regard to perennial human challenges that lie beyond the scope or reach of logical reasoning. Individuals who stay receptive to external unexpected events, who turn accidental cues into meaningful ones, and who actively work to enhance such experiences cope better with today's changing environment (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Moreover, by tolerating ambiguity and by staying open-minded, individuals gain a valuable opportunity to explore their intrinsic interests and desires and thus are better committed to their authentic identity at work (Blustein, 2011). When we transcend our own personal boundaries, we can reconnect with the depths and heights of our human nature and with the mysteries of the world around us. As can be seen in the following accounts, a sense of inner knowing may guide individuals' meaning and decision making:

> You feel it in your gut. We all feel the answer in our gut. Some call it intuition; I call it, "the knowledge of the heart." Often we are afraid to go there and to listen and afterwards we regret we didn't and say, "I knew it, I felt it was true or false." If you are open-hearted you get an answer. In here [*points to his stomach*] you know it is the right answer. (Male, 53, nonclinical)
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> I am very attentive to signs, messages … I know that if I feel that something is not right or true for me I won't stay even if it doesn't have any rational explanation. And it always proves itself in retrospect. When I follow my inner sense that something isn't right, even when I don't know how to explain it to myself, I usually get a sign or a message which validates that it is true. I don't need proof or logical explanations. This is what you call faith. (Female, 44, nonclinical)

Broadening the Scope of What It Means to Be Human

Paradoxically, the world, which is more connected than ever through technology and social networks, is also more fragmented and alienated than ever before. Cultural and traditional deconstruction and fragmentation are taking place, causing people to experience increased feelings of loneliness, meaninglessness, and detachment (Sperry & Shafranske, 2005). This presents new challenges—human, social, therapeutic, educational, conceptual, and

methodological. Notwithstanding the potential benefits of specialization in isolating and manipulating ingredients of physical, biological, and human systems (Stange, 2009), focusing on components of humans, systems, or communities as disconnected from their relation to the whole may be counterproductive. In the health care system, for example, such an approach is considered to underlie contemporary health crises such as ineffectiveness, inefficiency, commoditization, and inequality (Stange, 2002). With the contemporary Western specialization of health professions and the differentiation into a multitude of subspecialties in medicine and psychology, dismantling individuals and human life into components and ingredients to control and predict appears to yield a "hunger to be understood as a whole person … the desire to be understood and treated not as a liver, or a depression, or an addiction but as a complete and integrated person" (Miller & Thoresen, 1999, p. 10).

Humans need to be understood and validated holistically, rather than as fragmented components. Accordingly, the importance of nonreductionism is a guiding heuristic principle in Frankl's model of the ontology of man. The physiological, the psychological, and the noetic (or spiritual) dimensions constitute a human person and hence cannot be rejected or overlooked (Russo-Netzer, Schulenberg, & Batthyany, 2016; Wilber, 1980, 2000). Each of these dimensions reflects a layer of qualities and functions that interact with each other but is nonetheless ontologically independent from one another (Frankl, 1946, 1973). A lack of alignment has been regarded by existential thought to reflect a state of inauthenticity reflected in spiritlessness and self-denial (Kierkegaard, 1962).

A shift in perspective enabling one to realize the capacity to lead an authentic life can occur through an encounter with life's limitations and finitude. Such an encounter might involve the anxiety of an experience in which one's familiar and secure world is torn asunder or in which one faces the possibility of death. Alternatively, personal transformation may be triggered through the realization of an inner calling to take up the task of living with resoluteness and full engagement (e.g., Spiegelberg, 2012). In a paraphrase of Plato's allegory of the cave, delving into the depths of what it means to be fully, wholly human involves cracking open further chinks in one's perceptual cavern, so to speak. Thus, although it may be impossible to live authentically all the time, we always have a choice whether to open up our inner core in spite of our imperfections and limitations. The alternative is to close it off and live an inauthentic life, one in which we forget we will die and we pretend we fit certain cultural or social expectations. Such choices construct us as human beings. As one interviewee put it:

> In this [growth] process you often realize that things you considered as yourself are actually appearances of you, and not who you really are. And then you get to deeper levels and you realize that these too are only things that belong to you, but not who you are. They are descriptions of you but they are not who you are. And you work to peel off these layers. Layer after layer you break free. (Male, 51, nonclinical)

Moving Beyond Zero-Sum, Binary Categories to Uncover New Shades of Being

Recently, empirical psychological research concerning well-being has become more sensitive to the potential that lies in human paradoxes, limitations, and complexities, as well as to the downside of positivity. More specifically, alongside the popularity and significant contributions of the field of positive psychology, claims have been raised that more depth and a greater existential-humanistic perspective should be taken into consideration (e.g., Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001; Taylor, 2001) and that core questions regarding the human condition cannot be fully addressed through a positive-only approach (e.g., Ivtzan et al., 2015; Lazarus, 2003; Wong

et al., 2006). Recent accumulated evidence affirms these claims against binary or dichotomous thinking. This evidence is in line with Grant and Schwartz's (2011) theory of "too much of a good thing," which suggests nonmonotonic inverted-U-shaped effects, whereby when positive phenomena reach high levels, their effects begin to turn negative. For example, various studies have suggested the paradoxical effect that the more individuals value happiness, the less likely they will be able to actually attain it (Mauss, Tamir, Anderson, & Savino, 2011; Schooler, Ariely, & Lowenstein, 2003). Research has also demonstrated that high optimism may backfire (Brown & Marshall, 2001; Milam, Richardson, Marks, Kemper, & McCutchan, 2004) and that overusing strengths may harm well-being and performance (Freidlin, Littman-Ovadia, & Niemiec, 2017; Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). Overall, based on a growing body of research, the conclusion is that there are downsides to the positives (Forgas, 2014; Ivtzan et al., 2015; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015; Wong, 2011) and upsides to the negatives (e.g., Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2015; Norem & Chang, 2002; Woolfolk, 2002; Wong, 2012). Thus, in line with the appraisal principle of PP 2.0 that classifying phenomena as either positive or negative should be contextually dependent rather than arbitrary (Lomas, 2016), a complete and solid understanding of that which makes us human cannot simplify complexities, avoid dark sides, or bypass contradictive states.

       At the core of our being as humans lie paradoxes and dichotomies that contain the whole of existence and encapsulate completeness (see also van Deurzen, 2015). Examples of such constitutive paradoxes abound in our existence and may include striving for connection and absorption together with independence, self-focus together with self-transcendence, and infinite choices in a finitude being. The capacity to be aware and hold dialectics in a coherent manner is illustrated in this interview excerpt:

> You are, so to speak, sure of everything, but you are not sure of anything. You know everything is yours and nothing is yours. You know that you live forever and you live for a second … and that is why I am telling you that I don't have a clue about anything. It is not out of pride, I just understand that there is no point to it. Who are we? We are all just a deposit. That is all. And knowing that, life suddenly becomes peaceful; full of vicissitudes but still peaceful. (Male, 47, nonclinical)

Another vivid example of such dialectics and paradoxes that are part and parcel of human existence as a whole is the awareness of our significance that emerges from acknowledging our insignificance in the world.

> It was weird—it was a suicide attempt on New Year's Eve. I was alone on campus … I had drank and taken drugs. I think I was out for a day, you know, passed out there … and when I woke up, it was night. And I went down to the lake and there was, like, gazillion stars, you know? And it was the silence with the lake being so silent and groaning, too, like lakes, when they freeze, they have this groan. It was just spectacular beauty. And it, like, struck me—I was overwhelmed by my insignificance, and yet of being a part of this natural order … that sort of allowed for this turning point of, you know, recognizing my own place in the world. (Female, 45, clinical)

       In a way, the art of living an authentic life in the face of transient existence engages the full range and aspects of being human. An expanded view of what it means to be human, in the light of life's complexities, must embrace both victories and failures, crises and hopes, pain and joy, potentials and limitations. Rainer Maria Rilke (1996) captured this essence beautifully: "Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence,

something helpless that wants our love" (p. 75). In other words, getting in touch with and agreeing to observe our deepest fears, our dragons, so to speak, enables us to get to know them as they really are—vulnerable parts within ourselves that need our caring attention in order to heal and to reconnect with authentic life forces. In a similar vein, anxiety can be seen not only as maladaptive but also as an indicator of being alive, as a source of energy and strength to live more deeply and more fully (Tillich, 2000). The capability of holding and moving between dichotomous states of hope and despair, absurdity and purposefulness, inherent to human existence appears to be reflected in the experience of a complex, nuanced, and complete way of being, as these excerpts reveal:

> I am happier today … but a different kind of happy … I'm not "happy high (yoo-hoo)," but a more gentle, subtle and silent kind of happiness that lies deep within. It is much more stable, much more lasting. An inner happiness in my heart … it is something that stays, it's always there even if something happens and I'm angry or sad, it's there. (Female, 45, nonclinical)
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> I feel I am much calmer and peaceful, and ultimately much happier … I feel that I have more joy in my life now, less falseness, less pretending, less "playing" … I am much truer to what I am feeling, closer to myself … it clearly gives me much more peace and serenity, but its greatness is that along with peacefulness it also leaves space to be human, to be angry. (Male, 35, nonclinical)

Appreciating the Joining of Opposites and the Value of Brokenness

> There is nothing more whole than a broken heart.
>
> —Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

Human wholeness is an ongoing and vibrant process, not a static state, and an essential part of human wholeness is allowing ourselves to get fully involved with life and be vulnerable enough to be broken. Our emotional spectrum is broad, and to miss any of it would be to miss out on the spectacular experience of wholeness. In fact, a new study has uncovered 27 varieties of emotional experiences, suggesting a rich and nuanced range of emotional states (Cowen & Keltner, 2017). Coming into direct contact with the world entails an exposure to and engagement with the full spectrum of colors and the beauty and pain that life encompasses. Human life is not neatly organized as theoretical conceptualizations presume it to be; it is a blend, a mixture of colors. New, rich, and more intense colors emerge from that mixture and blend, not just residing next to each other, such as in painters' color palettes. Some of our most meaningful experiences are bittersweet, a blend of colors, of flavors. In this sense, if we have never been broken, fully involved, or touched by life, we can never be truly whole. Wholeness involves brokenness as an essential and inherent part of a full life.

A vivid example of this idea is the art of *kintsugi*. The essence of *kintsugi* ("golden rejoining" in Japanese) is uncovering the hidden beauty and power of the shattered, in which the broken beauty not only survives but thrives. Through this technique, broken ceramic pottery is alchemized into a beautifully restored masterpiece, whereby rather than hiding the flaws, the cracks are highlighted in gold. Likewise, the triumph of the human spirit emerges not from discarding our wounded parts but from embracing our imperfections and rejoining them as pieces of a beautiful masterpiece and a more complete whole. Just as, according to the poet Rumi, "the wound is the place where the light enters you," when we allow ourselves and others to acknowledge and cultivate the power and beauty that underlie the cracks and wounds,

something new is given a space for growth. The potentially destructive becomes constructive, as can be seen in these interview excerpts exemplifying the defiant power of the human spirit in the face of life's challenges:

> When I fall, I am more capable of picking myself up, even taking advantage of that to my own good. It is more meaningful than gathering all the pieces together: it is to create something new out of it. (Female, 53; nonclinical)
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> People can lock me up in a hospital and they can put me into a padded quiet room and they can strap me down with 5-point restraints and give me all these meds … but no matter what people do to me, I realized that I always have my mind, my thoughts, and my feelings … whenever there's difficult things, I just remind myself for the things I feel really thankful … now when bad things happen I have that wisdom. (Male, 48, clinical)

The joining of opposites—such as light and dark, pain and growth, our most beautiful and ugliest moments, the depth of despair and the height of elevation—in the creation of a whole corresponds to Ryff et al.'s (2014) assertion:

> The cure is [thus] not defined by the alleviation of emotional discomfort, or the attainment of some ideal feeling state, but by being able to take constructive action in one's life—i.e., being able to live a full and meaningful existence, rather than be ruled by passing emotions. (p. 12)

Similarly, PP 2.0's core dialectical principles of covalence and complementarity (Lomas, 2016; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015; Wong, 2011) hold that "wellbeing fundamentally involves a 'dynamic harmonization' of dichotomous states" (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015, p. 6). In other words, healing and flourishing inevitably entail acknowledging and confronting the dark side of human existence, which reflects the dialectical coexistence of positives and negatives (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015), and the principle of self-transcendence (Wilber 1980, 2000; Wong, 2011). As can be seen in the following excerpt, a holistic sense of self involves embracing and accepting what otherwise can be seen as the dark side:

> I have had so many parts within me that I refused to acknowledge … like my anger, my aggression, even my cruelty. These things were the most difficult to encounter, but once I did, so much space cleared up. All those weights that I carried, I've learned to treat them as my growth space and not as my enemy … I let go of control and met these parts within me of hard feelings, of my weaknesses, of death wishes, and it is such a corrective experience because once you validate these parts within you, when you accept them rather than struggle, you finally feel whole. (Male, 51, nonclinical)

The vitality that comes from owning ourselves thus appears to entail an acknowledgment and validation of various parts and voices within the self, even contradicting ones. Yet the key is not just that we need the negative in order to acknowledge the positive, to facilitate it, or to channel it toward positive outcomes. More than that, to be fully alive entails being in touch with both extremes of life. Is the negative or "bad" merely the negation or absence of the positive or "good"? Or is reality more complex than zero-sum, binary structures and definitions? Are there benefits to being weak, fragile, and vulnerable, not only to being resilient, competent, and strong? To gain full authority over our lives, we must acknowledge and embrace our limitations and weaknesses, not merely as leverage for growth and resilience but as valued and significant ingredients of human nature. They orient us toward self-discovery and remind us of our deeply held values and authentic existence, which touches life's innermost ultimate concerns: birth and death, isolation and connection, meaning and emptiness, freedom and responsibility.

However, that being said, it is important to offer a few words of caution or reservation.

While in general good and bad, or positive and negative, should, as discussed, be acknowledged and embraced as part of human nature, not all negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors can be morally or ethically treated as equally worthwhile or beneficial, as human history has unfortunately proven. Thus, further theoretical and empirical exploration is needed to unravel the delicate nuances, conditions, and potential problematics involved in giving equal importance and meaning to both the negatives and positives of human nature. An important step in that direction is the concept of conscience that has been suggested by Frankl (1963) as the mechanism through which individuals can become attuned to the meaning potential in any given moment and to discern right from wrong as required by any unique situation. As a function of the human spirit and unlike Freud's superego, conscience remains free to take a stand in the face of a given cultural norm or moral (Lewis, 2011). In Frankl's words,

> In an age in which the Ten Commandments seem to lose their unconditional validity, man must learn more than ever to listen to the ten thousand commandments arising from the ten thousand unique situations of which his life consists. And as to these commandments, he is referred to, and must rely on his conscience. (Frankl, 1969, p. 65)

Wholeness with an Eye Toward the Future

Being, thus, should not only be well but also whole. With an eye to the future, it is the suggestion of this essay that conceptual, theoretical, and empirical developments of these ideas within PP 2.0 should be accompanied by interventions in the practice of therapy, education, organizations, and health care. Interventions aimed toward the cultivation of whole-being, rather than merely well-being or happiness, may build on evidence-based practices of first wave positive psychology as well as meaning interventions, along with practical implications of PP 2.0 principles. For example, in education we should take note to not teach students that happiness of the absence-of-sadness variety is the default position. Rather, we should aim at creating for them the conditions to develop a sense of healthy and balanced wholeness, of being fully engaged in and touched by life. Such practice involves developing a flexible mindset that acknowledges vulnerability and cultivating a space that embraces struggle, mistakes, failures, imperfection, and the full emotional spectrum. One teaching method is to expose students to real-life stories to learn more deeply about the importance of the holistic approach in the face of life's complexities. As Kübler-Ross (1975) expresses it:

> Should you shield the valleys from the windstorms, you would never see the beauty of their canyons. The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen. (p. 96)

In this sense, encouraging students to choose to "say yes to life," to become aware of and to be fully immersed in the unrepeatable moments in their day-to-day existence, may enable them to engage in a vital and authentic dialogue with life itself. Furthermore, the daily routine in schools allows for the creation of "rituals" that facilitate a space for self-exploration. Joint discussions and contemplations inspired by the "big books" such as sacred, philosophical, and other texts may stimulate Socratic dialogues and broaden awareness of values, morality, virtues, and dilemmas concerning the question of what it means to be a human being. An exposure to nature and the creative arts (such as songs, quotes, metaphors, symbols, arts, drama, guided imagery, or music) may also contribute to the creation of a broad and holistic foundation for personal

expression, exploration, and active learning in regard to the self, life, and the world.

　　The same applies to workplaces and organizations, where our current culture tends to push for optimizing happiness, which is unrealistic. In the therapeutic setting, we can aim to help our clients explore the full range of the existential spectrum, guided by the question of "How can I help my client get closer to life?" instead of "How can I help my client become happier?" We can ask our clients, "What did you learn today that has taught you something about what it means to be you?" Furthermore, popular interventions such as "benefit finding" in challenging situations may be broadened from only promoting positive growth to inquiring as to how allegedly negative emotions (such as fear, deep sadness, or anger) stemming from these challenges have contributed to a sense of wholeness, self-discovery, and authenticity.

Concluding Remarks

> There is in all things … a hidden wholeness. There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a foundation of action and joy. It rises up in gentleness and flows out to me from the unseen roots of all created being.
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　—Thomas Merton

The search for the hidden sense of wholeness that lies in the heart of all that exists—be it in ourselves as human beings or in the world around us—can be traced throughout history and across cultures and appears to emerge ever more forcefully in the present fragmented and deconstructed world of instabilities. In this article, I attempted to highlight two overarching, interrelated, and complementary facets of the broad framework of wholeness.

　　First, I addressed the importance of expanding ways of knowing by giving more attention to the multitude of dimensions and perspectives that exist in order to gain a sense of the whole. I suggested that in order to avoid the risk of oversimplification, reductionism, or partial understanding, we need to go back to the things themselves to complement big data with the human voice and context. More than that, wholeness also involves the realization that there is something more to human experience than meets the eye, and it is that something more that animates life as we experience it. Expanding the ways of knowing includes cultivating a humble and fresh outlook toward that which is yet to be known as well as consciously adopting an open-minded and open-hearted approach to additional sources of knowing ourselves and the world, such as intuition and synchronicity, as they may hold insights on perplexing questions at the core of human existence. More specifically, this alternative perspective includes (a) the inclusion of constructivist and phenomenological and narrative/hermeneutic research and practice approaches; (b) the value of integrative quantitative and qualitative research approaches for studying meaning of life, wholeness, and well-being; and (c) drawing on literary, poetic, and spiritual sources for understanding the richness of human experience.

　　Second, I addressed broadening the scope of what it means to be human and the specific significance of holistically considering, understanding, and validating human beings rather than treating them as fragmented components. Wholeness, as existence itself, is not a static destination to which we should aim, but rather a constantly changing, revolving state of becoming. As Frankl (1985) puts it,

> Man is not fully conditioned and determined but rather he determines himself whether he gives in to conditions or stands up to them … man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment. (p. 154)

This position does not reflect introspection that is isolated from the world but rather entails full

and deep engagement with life's complexities and contradictions as well as recognition of the blurred boundaries between seemingly monolithic or binary structures of positive–negative and good–bad. When we move beyond such zero-sum structures and neat conceptual frameworks to the reality of human beings, we are more capable of exploring the full and rich range of colors and experiences. The brokenness, downfalls, and defeats, as well as the glorious highs and victories, the ordinary and the extraordinary, all contain the seeds of such wholeness.

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