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Take that COVID! Positive Documents Emerging from the Museum Sector

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Introduction

The past year and a half has been a time of great complexity across the world. Sorrow, sadness, loss, tragedy, and trauma surround us as we deal with a global pandemic. And yet, in the year and a half since the world shut down as we know it, out of this loss came optimism, humor, care, gratitude and even joy. We could see evidence of it in so many aspects of our lives, from the kind messages posted in windows to the good news networks formed in response to the relentless negative news, to social media posts about self-care, bringing us all reminders that not everything is bad right now. In fact, the creativity and compassion that emerged has been gratifying and pleasantly surprising. Museums are no stranger to this response, as they too, scrambled to figure out how to survive, as well as to support their staff and audiences (and beyond, it turns out) through these strangest of times. Museums (and their related cousins) emerged as a source of positivity in many ways, fostering a sense of community and care. This paper will highlight the emergence of documents during the pandemic that illustrate the presence of the emerging Flourishing Museums Framework.

Positivity

Before demonstrating the emergent positive documentation from museums during the pandemic, we must first define a few terms. By positive (not positivist) we mean that which leads to flourishing, resulting in benefits for oneself and for others, supported by biology and empirical social science research (Hanson, 2013). It is important to clarify that while positive experiences often feel good, not all positive things are good. At the same time the inverse is true, not all negative experiences result in the bad; we've heard the oft stated, "too much of a good thing" meaning too much of something good is actually not good, such as alcohol or rich food (Frederickson, 2009). Positive also does not mean that one insensitively insists on happiness when something needs quiet and reverence, and it does not suggest straying from difficulties or hard topics. One of the most important and promising topics studied in positive psychology, *Flourishing*, moves beyond the confines of simple happiness or well-being, offering a more holistic perspective on what it means to feel well and happy. The founder of Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman (2012) defines flourishing as the state we create when we tend to the five factors that enable it: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (a.k.a PERMA). Each of these factors are backed up by an enormous amount of data, both physiological and psychological. Despite the human (biologically based) propensity towards a negativity bias (Frederickson, 1998), we now have decades of research that shows positive emotions provide both mental and physical benefits, helping a person to enjoy life and feel more satisfied here

and now, with physical health benefits for the immune system, cardiovascular system, and lengthening life (Hanson, 2013).

Barbara Frederickson (2009), one of the leading positive psychologists today, found that ten positive emotions emerge most: love, joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, and awe.). From this she determined that, “Positivity is essential to the growth of all humans... Positivity broadens our minds and expands our range of vision” (p. 55).

Positivity is not about smiley faces and suppressing emotions but includes positive meanings and optimistic attitudes that trigger positive emotions, open minds, and have long-term impact on one’s life (Frederickson, 2009). It cannot prevent all bad things from happening, but it can change a person’s outlook on how to be in the world in a way that enhances both their mental and physical health, as well as their relationships with others. Frederickson (2009) says that positivity: feels good, changes how your mind works, transforms your future, puts the breaks on negativity, obeys a tipping point, and can be increased (Frederickson, 2009). She also points out that positivity comes in many shapes and sizes as emotions are highly individualized (Frederickson, 2009).

The research on positivity in organizations is equally as rich as that in psychology. Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) is a field that has grown enormously in the past decade with similar intentions as positive psychology, to build an empirical database of research to support positive approaches to organizational behavior. Introduced in 2003 as a new field of study in the organizational sciences, the field unifies a variety of approaches in organizational studies that incorporate notions of the “positive,” that is, the processes, dynamics, perspectives, and outcomes considered to be positive in both individual and collective situations with concepts such as Positive Leadership (Quinn, 2015), Resonant Leadership (Boyzatsis, 2005), Appreciative Inquiry (Coopriider, 2005; Barrett & Fry, 2008), Systems Thinking (Senge, 2006), Conscious Leadership (Hayden, 2016), Deep Change (Quinn, 2010), and High Quality Connections (Stephens et al., 2011). Other fields have taken on the flourishing perspective as well, such journalism, medicine, and education.

Positive Museology

The positive disciplines are growing. We now find versions in almost every field from positive journalism to positive tourism. As the core research in psychology and other fields grows and builds, the usefulness of this approach is becoming clearer every day. Museology is not exempt from this trend. So, what is Positive Museology? It is a framework for practice, built on empirical research, that focuses on human flourishing in museal contexts spaces and places where humans and objects interact in meaningful ways (Latham, in press). Using positive concepts,

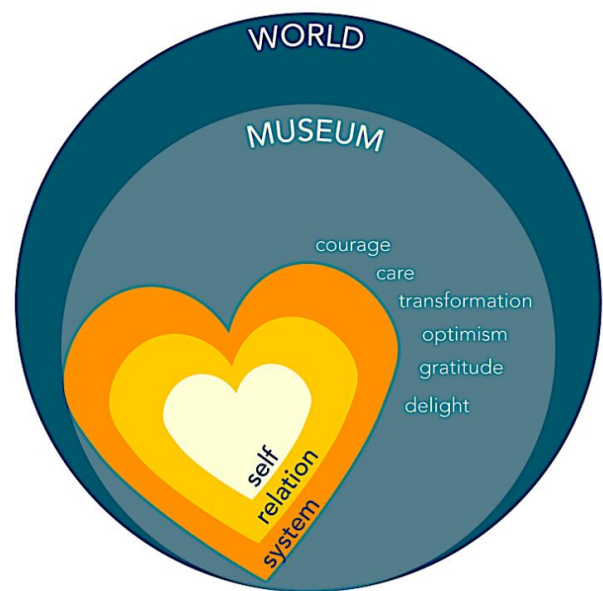
theories, approaches, applications, and intentions, the sector can work toward positioning museums to be a place for people to flourish, an intentional focus on well-being, mindfulness, compassion, gratitude, resilience, and strength of character. Through a positive lens, museums can enable visitor flourishing across a whole range of topics, from highly sensitive subjects and challenging perspectives to lighter topics as well. Research synthesized into a Positive Museology could help museum workers guide their own practice at work, cultivating a culture of care in museum work, resulting in these practices spreading throughout the whole museum system.

To organize and consolidate the tremendous amount of research, both in and out of our field, my colleague Brenda Cowan and I developed the *Flourishing Museum Framework* (see upcoming book, *Flourishing in Museums* published by Routledge). Here, we consider three interwoven layers of the museum system: self (individuals), relation (group interactions), and system (which includes the whole museum but also the external systems within which it exists). Where these three perspectives meet, we consider six areas of positive reflection and practice: courage, transformation, care, optimism, gratitude, and delight. The Framework is dynamic and fluid, developing as the research and practice develop around it.

Here, we are using this framework to guide the outpouring of positivity we saw from museums during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Positive Museum Documents and Documentation

To illustrate the positive turn in museums during COVID-19 lockdowns across the world, one of us (Latham) first noticed positive posts from museal entities on social media, especially Instagram. During this same time, I (Latham) also began to solidify the *Flourishing Museums Framework* with Brenda Cowan. While the specific structure may change in the future, examples of the Framework in these posts were clearly unfolding and we decided to use this emerging construct in this paper to illustrate what emerged during lockdown.



Encouraged by the initial hints of positive museology exhibited on social media, we looked next to news articles, press releases, and postings on institutional websites for examples of the Framework's elements in the museum field. The method of data collection began with keyword searches related to the six categories outlined in the *Flourishing Museums Framework* found in museum documentation. Most data were collected from online news sources where the timeline of examples was easier to track chronologically, and were sourced based on date, beginning in March 2020 through July 2021. Public news sources instead of academic journals were more productive sources of "on the ground" reports. Detailed examination of museum websites, press releases, and program/events pages also produced positively documented examples. News articles proved to be the most common media source for examples revealing elements of the *Framework*, followed by social media, with an emphasis on exhibitions, programs, community outreach, and collaboration with community partners that supported the themes of courage, care, transformation, optimism, gratitude, and delight. In this section, we give a short definition of each of the *Framework's* elements, followed by examples of documents that emerged in museums during the pandemic.

Courage

A concept that tends toward confrontation, courage is at the same time praised as a cardinal virtue (cf. Aquinas), held as central to the creation of a viable society (cf. Aristotle) (Worline, 2012), and is an almost universal presence in world mythology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of virtues, courage is a virtue with four underlying strengths: bravery, integrity, persistence, and vitality. In relationship to the concept of flourishing, courage encompasses these elements as well as resilience and self-awareness, each of which can be found in various practices in meaningful ways. Successful organizations are depending more on their workers' capacity to do things that may involve courage, such as persevere on difficult tasks, take initiative, and engage in innovation related to change (Worline, 2012). Courage is seen in institutions that focus on interpreting challenging and controversial content in bold, strategic, and straightforward ways, with the clear intention to foster positive outcomes and health in their participants. Resilience is an integral part of the meaning of courage and is a capacity that enables people, places, and systems to survive, adapt, and thrive (Aldrich, 2018). With the current trend in museums to intentionally address difficult subjects in direct and emotionally engaging ways, a deep understanding of the full spectrum of courage is particularly important. It involves looking holistically at both the topic and audience experience and balancing difficult or controversial subjects with integrity and a clear institutional ethos.

It needs to be said that many museum professionals deserve recognition for their courage during the pandemic. With all their physical manifestations shut down to the public, many museum workers still had a job to do caring for collections and maintaining safe environments. For those with living collections, the plants and animals couldn't participate in the shut down and workers had to go to work daily, despite the rules to stay home.

In addition, courage in museums during COVID-19 manifested in examples of the bravery, resilience, and dedication of healthcare and frontline workers. Most readily visible were exhibitions featuring the commitment of healthcare professionals. At the Orange County Regional History Center in Orlando, Florida USA both the theme of an exhibition and the featured artist Nelson Cárdenas, himself a hospital cook, exemplified courage (Rick, n.d.). *Healthcare Heroes: Portraits of Orlando Health's Frontline Workers*, an exhibition of 13 large-scale portraits of healthcare workers honored and provided an intimate look at the community's frontline healthcare staff, who worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rick, n.d.). In Portland, Oregon, USA the Japanese American Museum's virtual exhibition *Transcendents: Memorial to Healthcare Workers* honored healthcare workers who had courageously died from COVID-19 (Almendrala, 2021). The John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts USA produced a podcast called *COVID Courage: Healthcare Heroes*, featuring seven healthcare workers, honoring, and discussing their experiences and contributions during the pandemic (Porter & Richardson, 2021). The seven workers selected were chosen from a public nomination campaign that encouraged community members to nominate a healthcare hero who had gone above and beyond their everyday responsibilities as a front-line worker. These and many others like them, revealed exhibitions and public media that served as documents of courage by museums during the pandemic.

Transformation

Transformation is a state of being involving change in composition or structure, character, or condition (Merriam-Webster, 2021). There are many kinds of transformative experiences that can occur in the museum context: feelings of awe, appreciation of beauty, oneness, spirituality, restoration, mindfulness to name a few. Such experiences have notable positive effects including increased cooperation, creativity, motivation, immunological strength, and feelings of gratitude. Transformative experiences lead to greater life satisfaction and feelings of well-being (Cameron, 2012). Transformation can be experienced through moments of awe and a flow state. In the awe experience, a person loses themselves in the moment and feels diminished in the presence of a larger force, often societal, spiritual, or humanitarian in nature (Piff et al., 2015). Individuals in moments of

awe can seek out a means of participation or collaboration in collectives or groups, and, in so doing, experience feelings of openness, empathy and gratefulness. In organizations, even more benefits are significantly associated with transcendence, such as commitment, prosocial behavior, teamwork, courtesy, compliance, citizenship, and reciprocity (Cameron, 2012).

Documents revealing transformation in museums during the pandemic took forms through community collaboration, community outreach, and exhibitions and programs centered around individual, community, and societal change. Supporting individual transformation was the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, California's guided meditation program, MeditOcean, exemplified ("Reduce stress", 2020). *Middle Ground: Reconsidering Ourselves and Others*, an outdoor exhibit from the Exploratorium in San Francisco, California, USA, encouraged visitors to engage with interactive and digital experiences. These experiences enabled social interaction and compassion for others among visitors through an understanding of the of causes of polarization (Winterheld & Gutwill, 2021). The Science Museum of Minnesota, USA, engaged in a deeper model of community collaboration within the BIPOC community through a combination of research, co-creation, and evaluation resulting in positive documents in the form of a youth leadership workshop, a web-based STEM career pathways "game," and a podcast series about local activism (Bequette & Schreiber, 2021). The Frazier History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, USA, reached out to their community in the spirit of transformation through their program *Let's Talk, Bridging the Divide: Community Conversations at the Frazier*, where panel discussions addressed topics such as implicit bias, the Catholic Church's stance on gay marriage, hate crimes, voter suppression and how action through civility and civil discourse can begin conversations that can lead to flourishing (Platt, 2021). Notably, community engagement, through various means, was the strategy most used by museums to encourage and enable transformation.

Care

We hear a lot about *care* these days, especially in the time of COVID, but what do we mean by care? There is self-care, and care for others, care for the earth, care for the future. What they all have in common is a "constructive attentiveness" (Gorichanaz, 2020), a focus that is *on purpose*. But caring is finite; we cannot care for everything; we can choose to care for some things, hence the attentiveness mentioned above. Caring is always caring about, and therefore creates a network of relations. As Goleman (2005) points out, "to feel with another is to care," (p. 105). In fact, some would go as far to say that care (and empathy) is at the roots of morality (Hoffman, 1984) which leads to moral action in the world. Worline and Dutton (2017) believe that care is a fundamental human drive, that we have a need

to care, as humans. Even so, caring for our visitors and caring for each other at work must be intentional; it must be focused upon. In the museum context, this could manifest in many ways, referring to love, kindness, humanity, compassion, generosity, and restoration. In fact, it may be that the museum itself is a device for care, ensuring the protection and nourishment of objects, people, cultures, and history.

During the pandemic, documents of care were plentiful, found in exhibitions, programs, community outreach, and (yes!) theoretical development. The Eli & Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University's *Acts of Care* installation exhibited crowd-sourced examples of care from the community ("MSU Broad Acts of Care," 2020). The Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington, USA, created a framework called the Empathy Bridge that can be put to practical use, turning empathy into a social movement for conservation (Rother & Stuart, 2021). A similar theme of care for our planet emerged at the Museum of Modern Art Busan and the Daelim Museum, both in South Korea, where installations evoked the question of humanity's ecological responsibility to care for the earth (Han-sol, 2021). Other museums adapted their care initiatives to virtual formats to continue to reach their communities in meaningful ways. Virtual programming from the Kansas City Museum, Missouri, USA, used restorative practices to create their virtual programming, #RestoreKC, that addresses social responsibility (Krueger, 2021). The Perot Museum of Science and Nature in Dallas, Texas, USA, created virtual field trip experiences and adapted one of their physical TECH Trucks to a virtual format projected to reach 45,000 young people in city neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of poverty (Krueger, 2021). Community outreach took the form of providing innovative solutions to unique problems like when German museum, theatre, and cultural institutions offered German school systems the opportunity to utilize museum spaces as classrooms where students and teachers could safely physically distance during the pandemic (Brown, 2020). When independent Black radio station Numberz had their station closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Portland Museum of Art in Oregon, USA, offered them use of their 4th floor as the new station headquarters (Krueger, 2021). The Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey, USA, hosted a virtual townhall meeting with 100 residents, local leaders, and nonprofits to discuss pressing community issues, resulting in the museum agreeing to do a food drive to help a local soup kitchen, develop art programs for mental health organizations, and create more local in-person Spanish summer camps and classes for local Latino populations (Krueger, 2021). Growing Uptown, an initiative from the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum in New York City, USA, assembled kits for residents in need and/or facing food insecurity to grow their own food (Krueger, 2021). Showing care for their staff through the social media campaigns #TeamTuesday and #DixonAtHome, Dixon Gallery & Gardens showcased staff working from home, featuring personal experiences and photos

submitted by staff (Krueger, 2021). Addressing self-care, Dixon also introduced virtual meditation classes for at-risk teens (Krueger, 2021). Whether documents of care manifested as self-care, community care, or care for our planet, it was the most readily visible category of Positive Museology.

Optimism

Optimism is “expecting good things to occur in one’s life,” (Carver et al, 2009) and such a perspective is associated with higher subjective well-being (Carver et al., 2009; Aspinwall et al., 2001). With an intentionally more joyful outlook on life, we are in a much better position to enhance our well-being. Seligman (2011) calls this “learned optimism” and notes that optimism can be actively cultivated (Seligman, 2012, 2007). The opposite of learned optimism is learned helplessness (or pessimism), a phenomenon whereby individuals believe they are incapable of changing their circumstances after repeatedly experiencing a stressful event (Seligman & Garber, 1980; Maier & Seligman, 2016). This applies to both individuals and organizations. It is important to note that optimists do not ignore adversity, they address its existence and importance and take a proactive approach to solving it (Carver et al., 2009). As Seligman (2007) notes, “the basis of optimism does not lie in positive phrases or images of victory, but in the way you think about causes” (p. 52). Optimism in the museum can take many forms such as, hope, positivity, growth, and well-being.

Documents of optimism from museums emerged through research initiatives, adaptive event planning, and media development. From the Smithsonian USA came the 2020 Earth Optimism Digital Summit, an online event featuring more than 100 scientists, thought leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and experts, highlighting positive representations of ways they are working to protect the future of the planet (Fisher, 2020). The MoMA in New York City optimistically and resiliently altered event plans in March 2020, reformatting what had been in the works for many months to be a live event into a virtual setting for *Come Together Fest*, a day-long music and film festival that could no longer take place with in-person attendees due to the pandemic (The Museum of Modern Art, 2020). The Louve Abu Dhabi, to inspire creativity and spread positivity during the challenging times of the pandemic, created a podcast with a cinematic experience, using poetry and sound, available in six different languages, allowing listeners to explore the unique architecture of the museum from home (The Arab Weekly, 2020). Documents of optimism inspired hope and positivity to museum audiences through themes of environmental optimism, creativity, and adapting content to reach visitors at home.

Gratitude

Gratitude is a universal human quality, involving those inner aspects that strengthen bonds and connections with entities beyond the self (Watkins, van Gelder & Frias, 2009; Emmons, 2003). It has been long acclaimed as an inner state that has outward manifestations, and is an integral component of health, wholeness, and well-being (Emmons, 2003). The ability to notice, appreciate, and savor the elements of one's life has been viewed as a crucial determinant of well-being (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). In the popular realm, gratitude has recently been enjoying a lot of attention and much of this practice builds on sound research showing its positive effects. Probably the most visible research on gratitude comes with the gratitude journal studies that show daily journal-keeping helps people to become more grateful and giving (Watkins et al., 2009). These studies demonstrate that cultivating gratitude has lasting benefits including lifting your mood, increasing satisfaction with life, and building resilience (Hanson, 2013). Gratitude involves both awareness and action *regularly practiced*. Awareness of gifts takes extra effort because we must stop and consider, leaving space for this gratitude (Frederickson, 2009; Watkins, van Gelder, Frias, 2009). Frequent and sincere expressions of appreciation have been found to produce dramatic effects on individuals and organizations (Cameron, 2012).

Gratitude was a common theme in museums throughout the pandemic. Documents of gratitude in museums were found in exhibits, honorary accolades, and social media campaigns. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, the National Liberty Museum's (NLM) exhibit *Heroes Among Us* is an international exhibit celebrating and showing thanks to hundreds of teachers, students, police officers, firefighters & first responders, and healthcare professionals from around the world who have been awarded for their exemplary service ("Heroes Among Us," n.d.). NLM similarly hosted the international Healthcare Heroes Awards program, recognizing inspirational heroes in healthcare research and treatment whose accomplishments have profoundly benefited their patients, their field, and the global community ("Heroes Among Us," n.d.). The Neill-Cochran House Museum in Dallas, Texas USA reformatted a planned bus tour event for Juneteenth into a safe-distance driving tour where locals could pay homage to and show gratitude for the contributions of Black history in the Austin Texas area (Dasch, 2020). Many museum documents and documentation illustrated gratitude featuring examples of individual contributions deserving of thanks by the communities they served.

Delight

Although the scientific research does not classify delight as an overarching concept, we use it to refer to joy, humor, fun, amusement, and overall enjoyment. According

to Frederickson (2009), joy is one of the top ten forms of positivity. In her *Broaden and Build theory*, Frederickson (1998, 2003, 2009) posits that experiencing positive emotions broadens one's awareness and attention, thereby encouraging more varied, novel, and exploratory actions and/or thoughts. Over time, this broadened behavior builds skills and resources that, in turn, build enduring personal resources in a multitude of ways. Often used interchangeably with happiness and sometimes amusement, elation, and gladness, such feelings of joy arise in contexts that are safe and familiar. Joy can elicit playfulness, not only physically and socially, but intellectually and artistically (Frederickson, 1998). It also enhances creativity, innovation, and resilience (Frederickson, 2009). Play is often unscripted (i.e., open), imaginative, exploratory, and sometimes nonsensical and aimless (Frederickson, 1998).

This is a surprisingly big category for such a troubled time, but it shows that people need delight to feel human. In our own neighborhood, the Lansing Art Gallery and Education Center in Lansing, Michigan USA made great efforts to bring delight to their audiences with "take and make" sock puppet kits to be made at home and shared on social media ("Sock Creatures," 2021). Documents about delight in other museums showed themselves most notably in social media campaigns meant to bring humor and joy to viewers as well as the reformatting of programs to online spaces. The Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois featured a series of posts where penguins on field trips waddled cutely around Chicago landmarks (often inside museums!), otters played with and ate Halloween-themed enrichment items and food, and they also launched an online poll where visitors could vote to name a baby dolphin. In the same vein, the Georgia Aquarium let loose puppies to explore and meet new animal friends within the walls of the aquarium (Shedd, 2020a, 2020b; Williams, 2020). The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) in Michigan USA engaged their public through social media campaigns such as #AtHomeDIA where users recreated featured works from the collection at home and reposted online and the recurring series Art Hunt where users were provided a theme and invited to select a related work from the DIA collection and repost it online (Detroit Institute of Arts, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). The DIA also employed the more global hashtag campaign #MuseumsFromHome where visitors engaged with the museum and other visitors through social media (Smartify, 2020). Children's Museum of Manhattan in New York City created fun online content, beyond their regular programming for children, intended to inspire joy for younger visitors at home when the museum was forced to close due to the pandemic ("CMOM At Home", n.d.). Parents could access prerecorded activities through the institution's website & YouTube channel that included crafts, yoga, sing-a-longs, dance, and more ("CMOM At Home", n.d.). The UK's Birmingham Royal Ballet put forth *Empty Stage*, a film bringing delight through hope for the future of performing arts by featuring behind-the-scenes footage of dancers and Company members ("Empty

Stage”, 2021). Not all delight-inducing programs were moved online, however. The National History Museum of London UK featured the *Dino Snores* events for children and adults, where visitors could sleep over in the museum (“Events,” n.d.). Overall, documents of delight helped to bring joy to museum visitors though digital means during a time when they could not visit museums in person.

The Real Purpose of Museums Emerges? Or, Are Museums Essential?

From this incredible worldwide event we have all experienced, watching these incredible acts of positivity unfurl made me realize the true purpose of museums. You see, the purpose of museums has been an ongoing question as long as museums have existed, never seeming to arrive at a conclusion. The documents that emerged during the first 1½ years of our pandemic together—social media campaigns, exhibitions, online programs, new community practices—are revealing that museums have the potential to be about *love*.

For many years, I have claimed that the foremost purpose of museums is meaning-making (Silverman, 1995) and that learning and education are a part of this, but not their main purpose (Latham & Simmons, 2014; Hohenstein & Moussouri, 2018). In recent years, I have fine-tuned this further. I now believe that museums can be enablers of flourishing in the world and that this is their true purpose (Latham, 2021). Martin Seligman, one of the fathers of positive psychology, describes flourishing as “that which makes life worthwhile,” one that exemplifies mental health, is full of vitality, and functions positively in all realms of one’s life (Haidt & Keyes, 2003). Flourishing entails something beyond moments of enjoyment. It includes a sense that one’s pursuits serve a larger purpose or hold vital meaning (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). While there have been others in the museum field who have also pointed out this broader purpose of museums, only recently are we seeing an emergence of thought that explicitly states it, for example, in Falk’s (2021) recent well-being work, empathy in museums (e.g., Gokcigdem, 2016), and self-care books (e.g., Erdman, 2019).

Earlier this year, I wrote a blog post positing that the purpose—perhaps essence—of museums was love. I still hold to this and believe it is the way to move forward in museum studies. After 30+ years in museums, I look back on my experiences—as a visitor, a student, a practitioner, and an academic—and this conclusion makes the most sense to me. Ultimately, love is about positive emotions—gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, amusement, pride, inspiration, awe, and joy—actually altering the inner chemistry of our bodies (Frederickson, 2009). Love sparks compassion and empathy and unleashes the power of caregiving and caretaking. One of my favorite contemporary writers in yoga theory, Jennie Lee, says this about love:

Love is the purpose. It is the grand, overarching theme of a life well-lived.

To be loved, to give love, and to live in love. That is the ultimate practice... If the overarching purpose of museums is love—that is, our intentions and interactions, choices, and communications are all done with love in mind then our organizations are capable of implementing the *Flourishing Museum Framework*. Our organizations become places that cultivate and nurture care, courage, delight, gratitude, optimism, and transformation from staff to visitors. Imagine for a moment if museums worldwide were to subscribe to this? What would change? How would it manifest? Museums are document institutions, collecting, processing, interpreting, and sharing them with the world through social media. By creating document institutions with missions and values that affect all who work and visit them, museums act as spaces that bring people together and ultimately enable compassion. Museums are powerful holders of potential positivity. They are centers of celebrating courage, distributors of care, holders of optimism, agents of transformation, recipients and givers of gratitude, and enablers of delight.

To enable flourishing in both museum visitors and staff means enabling these things in others; it means being the site that, through objects and interpretation, does this kind of work intentionally. During the pandemic, through the documents they produced, many museums began doing this kind of work. Whether they were organized in their intention or did it out of necessity, many now have evidence that the positive approach is a worthy one. But, have museums learned from their experience? Will they continue on this path, or revert back to where they were before the global crisis began? Can positivity spread to other museums? How can the documents museums produce help with the spread of delight, or courage, or self-care? Only time will tell, but we hold hope.

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