



Several psychologists recently had the opportunity to meet with members of the Happiness Lab and Academic Coaches of Sweden at the European Conference on Positive Psychology in Copenhagen, Denmark. The group's vision and mission is to increase happiness in society by implementing research on well-being and making that research accessible to the public through workshops, talks, courses, and coaching. We asked Erik Fernholm - a member of the Happiness Lab and Academic Coaches - a few questions about his research group and their current activities:

1. Why did you originally begin researching this topic, and why do you think it's an important topic for the workshop you developed?

Successful relationships research started as a follow up to the wish expressed by the organizers of the ECPP 2010 conference to have a workshop focusing on interaction and contact, to complement the otherwise mainly theoretical programme. The best way for us to do that was to enable people to interact with each other, network, and explore tools that could enable connectedness based on authenticity. We find relationships, in the broad sense, essential for the promotion of well-being.

2. What specific research guided your workshop development, and what is your group working on - generally - right now?

Our main guideline was to shape an environment for positive interactions, an explorative landscape, a playground for contact, solidly founded in Positive Psychology research. We researched the work of Gable, Csikszentmihalyi, Frisch, Gottman, Lyubomirsky, Lacoboni, Kahneman and others looking for ways to create settings for participants to experientially try out applications of the recent relationship theories.

At the moment The Academic Coaches of Sweden are working on a number of interesting and important projects. One project involves a 3-day course spread over a 6-month period with the social services in Skara, Sweden, where we give seminars on positive psychology to help social

workers improve their work environment and their work results. Other projects involve integrating positive psychology in several high schools by teaching parents and teachers how to apply positive psychology to the everyday lives of students. We are also doing seminars for welfare officers who feel a need for positive psychology order to handle the stressful and negative parts of their line of work. There is a big need and demand for our knowledge on positive psychology and we are continuously doing speaks, courses, coaching sessions, articles and seminars and in different settings.

Another constant work in progress is making the need for psychological coaches visible to the public and being a voice for communication with the job market. With the starting-point in the scientific field of positive psychology we strive to make modern happiness research and interventions known to individuals, groups and society.

SIPPA would like to congratulate Erik Fernholm and the other researchers working on his for the great and innovative work they are doing. We also extend our thanks to Jason Van Allen, M.A. for writing this article.



SIPPA is accepting nominations for outstanding students in Positive Psychology. Students will be selected to be interviewed and written about in upcoming issues of IPPA's e-newsletter based on their commitment to positive psychology and contributions to the scientific advancement of our field. This is a great opportunity to honor talented students and encourage them to become more engaged in IPPA/SIPPA. Please email the following information to Jade at jade.a.bender@gmail.com if you would like to nominate a student:

1. Name, title, and affiliation of advisor/mentor
2. Name, title, and email address of nominee
3. A letter from the advisor/mentor describing the nominee's contributions to the field (Please no more than one page).
4. A copy of the nominee's current CV