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Chapter 3
Physical Literacy and Human Flourishing

Elizabeth Durden-Myers and Margaret Whitehead

For many years Len was very interested in what it is to be human and understanding and exploring human experience. Physical literacy often featured in his exploration of these themes. As a result of this Len introduced ideas such as vitality, becoming energised, having meaningful experiences, positive functioning and being authentically engaged in physical activity. In sum, he was very keen to unpack the relationship between physical literacy and human flourishing from an experiential point of view.

While the physical literacy community were contemplating and considering the definition and nature of the concept Len was looking more widely, working to locate physical literacy in relation to the wider perspective. The outcome of this is clear to see, in response to his passion to unravel this area members of IPLA were challenged to join him in his enquiry. As a result, the area of physical literacy and human flourishing featured in a Paper in the special edition of the Journal of Teaching in Physical Education (Durden-Myers, Whitehead and Pot, 2018) and generates two chapters in the forthcoming book Physical Literacy across the world (Durden-Myers and Whitehead, 2019a; 2019b).

The following passages are taken from an unfinished and unpublished paper by Len, entitled '*Eudaimonia and Modern Psychology'.* We will use this text to reflect on his contribution and development of physical literacy in relation to human flourishing. Len in his paper draws attention to Ryff's (1989) eudaimonia six-factor model and discusses two of these areas in more detail (self-acceptance and purpose in life). Thereafter, Len discusses eudaimonia in adolescence. Each of these areas is then the subject of our consideration. Extracts from Len's unpublished work are set out first and these are followed by a series of discussions that develop some of Len's themes.

Eudaimonia and Modern Psychology (Unpublished Paper)

Len Almond

Introduction

Ryff and Singer (2008) highlights the distinction between *eudaimonia wellbeing*, which they identify as psychological well-being, and *hedonic wellbeing* which they describe as pleasure attainment. Building on Aristotelian ideals of belonging and benefiting others, flourishing, thriving and exercising excellence, an eudaimonia six-factor structure is proposed by Ryff (1989):

1. Autonomy
2. Personal growth
3. Self-acceptance
4. Purpose in life
5. Environmental mastery
6. Positive relations with others

Ryff's (1989) six-factor model of eudaimonic well-being describes the six aspects of positive functioning that an individual who strives to lead a fulfilled life must endorse. Ryff (1989) argues that he pursuit and acquisition of positive relationships is an intrinsically motivated desire that is endorsed cross-culturally as a route to being void of ill-being as well as leading a meaningful life.

The results of a study conducted in the 90s exploring the relationship between well-being and those aspects of positive functioning that were put forth in Ryff's (1989) model, indicate that persons who aspired more for financial success relative to affiliation with others or their community scored lower on various measures of well-being (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Individuals that strive for a life defined by affiliation, intimacy and contributing to one's community can be described as aspiring to fulfil their intrinsic psychological needs. In contrast those individuals who aspire for wealth and material, social recognition, fame, image or attractiveness can be described as aiming to fulfil their extrinsic psychological needs. The strength of an individual's intrinsic (relative to extrinsic) aspirations as indicated by rankings of importance correlates with an array of psychological outcomes. Positive correlations have been found with indications of psychological well-being: positive affect, vitality, and self-actualization. Negative correlations have been found with indicators of psychological ill-being: negative affect, depression and anxiety.

Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance is one of the six factors in Ryff''s (1989) structure for eudaimonic well-being. It can be defined as:

- the awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses
- the realistic (yet subjective) appraisal of one's talents, capabilities, and general worth
- feelings of satisfaction with one's self despite deficiencies and regardless of past behaviours and choices

A person who scores high on self-acceptance:

- has a positive self-attitude
- acknowledges and accepts all aspects of themselves (including the good and bad),
- is not self-critical or confused about their identity
- does not wish they were any different from who they already are

Some psychological benefits of self-acceptance include mood regulation, a decrease in depressive symptoms, and an increase in positive emotions. Other psychological benefits include:

- a heightened sense of freedom
- a decrease in fear of failure
- an increase in self-worth
- an increase in independence (autonomy)
- an increase in self-esteem
- less desire to win the approval of others
- less self-critique and more self-kindness when mistakes occur
- more desire to live life for one's self (and not others)
- the ability to take more risks without worrying about the consequences

Self-acceptance is also thought to be necessary for good mental health.

Purpose in Life

Purpose in life refers broadly to the pursuit of life satisfaction. It has also been found that those with high purpose in life scores have strong goals and sense of direction. They feel that there is meaning to their past and present life and hold beliefs that continue to give their life purpose. Research in the past has focused on purpose in the face of adversity (what is awful, difficult, or absurd in life). Recently, research has shifted to include a focus on the role of purpose in personal fulfilment and self-actualisation. Identified here are three theoretical approaches to purpose in life, including:

1. Terror management theory
2. Self-control
3. Intrinsic motivation

Terror management theory (TMT) was originally proposed by Greenberg, Pyszczynski and Solomon (1986) based on the work of Becker (1973). The TMT proposes that we are driven by fear caused by an awareness of our own mortality. The self-control approach focusses on exercising self-control to achieve self-esteem by fulfilling goals and feeling in control of our own success. This is further reinforced by a sense of intentionality in both efforts and outcomes. Frankl (2011) argues that the intrinsic motivation approach emphasis finding value in three main areas: creative, experiential, and attitudinal. Creative values are expressed in acts of creating or producing something. Experiential values are actualised through the senses and may overlap the hedonistic view of happiness. Attitudinal values are prominent for individuals who are unable to pursue the preceding two classes of values. Attitudinal values are believed to be primarily responsible for allowing individuals to endure suffering with dignity.

A personal sense of responsibility is required for the pursuit of the values that give life meaning, but it is the realisation that one holds sole responsibility for rendering life meaningful that allows the values to be actualised and life to be given true purpose. Determining what is meaningful for one's self provides a sense of autonomy and control which promotes self-esteem. All three of the above theories have self-esteem at their core. Self-esteem is often viewed as the most significant measure of psychological well-being, and highly correlated with many life-regulating skills. Purpose in life promotes and is a source of self-esteem; it is not a by-product of self-esteem.

Eudaimonia in Adolescence

There has been a significant focus in past research on adulthood, in regard to well-being and development and although eudaimonia is not a new field of study, there has been little research done in the areas of adolescence and youth. Research conducted with this age group had previously explored more negative aspects, such as problem and risk behaviours (i.e. drug and alcohol use/misuse). Adolescents rapidly face cognitive, social and physical changes, making them prime subjects to study for well-being and development.

Previous research (no reference found) on positive youth development and the eudaimonic identity theory identify three developmental elements: *self-defining activities*, *personal expressiveness* and

goal-directed behaviours. Research (no reference found) determined that adolescents sample multiple *self-defining activities*; these activities aid in identity formation, as individuals choose activities that they believe represents who they are. These *self-defining activities* also help determine the adolescent's social environments. For example, an adolescent involved in sport and physical activity, would likely surround themselves with like-minded active and competitive people. *Personal expressiveness*, are the activities that we choose to express and connect with our "*daimon*" through subjective experiences. Finally, *goal-directed behaviours*, are developed through goal setting, where individuals work towards identity establishment. Adolescents recognise their passions, abilities and talents and aim to fulfil their goals and behave in a way that appeases their true self.

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Building from Len's reading, study and views.

Reflections on Human Flourishing, Eudaimonic Well-being and Physical Literacy

Considering physical literacy alongside human flourishing had not been a significant area of development for the IPLA, however following Len's investigations and thinking in this field a considerable amount of work has been undertaken. Subsequently the area featured in both the special edition of the Journal of Teaching in Physical Education (2018) and in the publication Physical Literacy across the World (2019).

Following Len's reference recommendations, it was recognised that physical literacy shared a number of constituents with human flourishing. Using Ryff's analysis it became clear that, in respect of Autonomy, Personal growth, Self-acceptance, Purpose in life, Environmental mastery and Positive relationships with others, there was an immediate synergy between these two concepts.

Autonomy is seen as relating to independence, self-determination, agency, responsibility, freedom and liberty. Physical literacy aims to encourage individuals to be responsible for adopting a physically active lifestyle. This is seen in the second part of the definition which reads '….to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.' In this context participants are encouraged to take ownership of their involvement in physical activities, indeed promoting individual autonomy is an aspiration embedded within physical literacy.

Personal growth is understood as encompassing having a positive attitude to learning, enquiry and exploration of new opportunities. Individuals exhibit ambition and forward thinking. Physical literacy aims to develop motivation and confidence through progressive achievement appropriate to age and endowment. These two areas of the affective domain are, again, spelled out in the definition. Growth and accomplishment are realised in developing physical competence in physical activity in a wide variety of environments. This depends on individual initiative and imagination as well as application of movement patterns. Personal growth is a very significance aspect of all work to foster physical literacy.

Self-acceptance is taken to cover realistic and positive self-perception. This includes the acceptance of, and contentment with, personal potential and the awareness of strengths and weaknesses. These personal traits issue in sound self-esteem and a robust self-concept. Those advocating physical literacy strongly support showing respect for each person as unique, with individual potential. This approach springs from phenomenological principles underpinning physical literacy. Realistic self-perception is fostered through developing motivation and self-confidence. The mode of 'assessment' of physical literacy is designed to re-enforce self-acceptance in that it is ipsative, that is, based on previous performance. Pupils are encouraged to set their own goals and evaluate how far they have achieved these. Self - acceptance permeates the work in physical literacy not least in celebrating steps individuals take in realising their individual potential and developing a positive sense of self.

Purpose in life is seen to include having a clear sense of direction, commitment and perseverance. It also encompasses personal clarity relating to values by which to live and a considered vision of the future. Proponents of physical literacy see involvement in physical activity as providing a rich variety of opportunities that can play a part in defining life. Physical activity offers new horizons and can feature in mapping life experiences for the future. It is believed that engagement in physical activity in the context of physical literacy can add meaning and purpose to life**.** The strap line of the IPLA is 'Choosing physical activity for life' thus clearly signalling the potential of physical activity to feature in a purposeful life.

Environmental mastery is understood to describe productive relationships within a wide range of environments. This will involve astute perception, clear understanding and imagination. Significantly responses to new environments will build from previous experiences. Progress is made where earlier learning informs new challenges. Physical literacy is grounded in existentialism which identifies that interaction with the world is the seedbed of all development. Human embodiment is involved in most interaction and thus meaningful involvement in physical activity in a range of situations and environments are central to the concept. In all writing about physical literacy the need for rich and varied experience is described as lying at the heart of the enterprise.

Positive relationships with others embraces good interpersonal skills of listening, understanding and empathising. Also included would be the establishment of mutual trust and a caring and responsive attitude towards fellow participants. These sensitive and perceptive inter-personal skills mean that the individual makes a positive contribution to group enterprises. Much engagement in physical activity takes place alongside others and indeed many activities rely on the actions of others. To achieve effective participation individuals are guided to develop mutual respect, empathy and

responsiveness in relation to others. Willingness to learn from others and a positive inclusive attitude are also nurtured. The fostering of physical literacy undoubtedly includes the realisation of positive relationships with others. This issues in making the experiences genuinely meaningful and rewarding for all.

Considering the above and Len's article the chapter explores in more detail self-acceptance, purpose in life and eudaimonia in adolescence.

Self-Acceptance and Physical Literacy

Self-acceptance is one of the six factors in Ryff''s (1989) structure for eudaimonic well-being. These factors have been fleshed out briefly above. However, Len highlighted the importance of self-acceptance and clearly sees the contribution that physical literacy can make to individuals' achieving well-being. His concern for this area has influenced the IPLA in their thinking about the implications of physical literacy to practice. Working from Len's three lists set out in his writing, the notion of promoting self-acceptance has been woven into IPLA's recommendations for practitioners. Examples considered here are practitioner feedback, differentiation and providing opportunities for decision making. The table below describes how a focus on developing self-acceptance highlights aspects of work to promote physical literacy.

Table 1: Self-Acceptance and Physical Literacy

Potential benefits of fostering self-acceptance	**Broad learning/teaching approach in line with developing physical literacy**	**Practitioner action in fostering physical literacy and within this growth of self-acceptance**
- development of self esteem - increase in self worth - secure attitude to self - identity - accept self as they are	Via the use of appropriate feedback	- Feedback is personal and private - Practitioner knows learner as an individual and respects individual potential - Effort, progress and achievement recognized and - celebrated
- loss of fear of failure - see tasks as personal matter - have no fear of degrading comparison - less concerned to win approval of others	Via appropriate differentiation	- Set tasks that are challenging but within reach, thus bringing the satisfaction of success - Practitioner uses differentiation by task, outcome and mode of learning/teaching
- confidence to take more risks	Via providing opportunities for choice	- Setting own goals, evaluate own progress, opportunities

- appreciate life is for one's self - develop a sense of freedom - increase in independence		to create own ideas and solutions.

It is suggested that the promotion of self-acceptance should be taken seriously in the aspiration of fostering physical literacy. Physical literacy is nurtured in the myriad of experiences that the individual encounters in the field of physical activity. It is the combined effect of these experiences that influence the development of motivation, confidence, physical competence and knowledge and understanding that are crucial both to physical literacy and to self-acceptance in respect of physical acuity. Hence to ensure that experiences are constructive, thought needs to be given to aspects of participant/practitioner interaction. The aspects of feedback, differentiation and choice have been singled out above as examples of practices that can enhance self-acceptance. These views are commensurate with Len's interest to interrogate what he called 'the pedagogy of engagement'.

Purpose in Life and Physical Literacy

Psychologists and philosophers have long been interested in the human experience of meaning and purpose in life (Martela & Steger, 2016; Yalom, 1980). Hooker, Masters and Park (2018) describe meaning in life as a multidimensional construct with three key aspects: comprehension (feeling as though one's life makes sense), purpose (feeling directed and motivated by valued goals) and mattering (feeling that one's existence is significant). One aspect, purpose, is often used interchangeably with meaning in the literature (George & Park, 2013). Purpose however, refers to behavioral engagement in life goals and valued activities (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Previous research has shown that purpose in life, the belief that one's life is meaningful and goal-directed, is associated with greater engagement in self-reported physical activity (Hooker and Masters, 2016). The reverse correlation is also found. Physical activity engagement can promote a greater sense of purpose in life, and the belief that one's life is meaningful.

Len also saw this connection and drew our attention to the shift in research to include a focus on the role of purpose in personal fulfilment and self-actualisation. It could be argued that the actualising of human potential can facilitate the nurturing of purpose and meaning in life. This is where the capability approach proposed by Nussbaum (2000/2011) could be used to describe and signpost what it is to be human in the identification of human capabilities. Len himself read widely about capabilities – both from Nussbaum's perspective and from the parallel work of Sen (1994). One issue that initiated significant debate was whether physical literacy could legitimately claim to be a capability in its own right or was best seen as contributing to most other capabilities. Nussbaum identifies ten central capabilities to human life. These are outlined in the table below. Each capability is expanded in relation to its relationship to human rights and the way it can be realised more fully by a contribution from embodied acuity. Following further debate in the IPLA, physical literacy as a unique aspect of human nature is proposed as an eleventh central capability. We feel that Len would be likely to support this dual approach to the relationship between capabilities and meaning in life, that is, as a valuable contributor and as of value in itself.

Table 2: Capabilities Approach Table from Whitehead (2019)

Central Capability	Rights from Nussbaum (2000/2011)	Suggested Contribution of Embodied Acuity
Life	Right to life of a normal length	Right to be involved in physical activity to prolong life
Bodily health	Right to adequate food and shelter	Right to be involved in physical activity to maintain health
Bodily integrity	Right to freedom of movement and having body boundaries treated as sovereign	Right to freedom to move from place to place. Right to ownership of own living-body/body-as-lived. Right to have embodiment respected.
Senses, imagination	Right to use senses to imagine, think, and reason. Right to freedom of expression	Right to be involved in physical activity to use embodied dimension to develop creativity, imagination and rationality.
Emotions	Right to have attachments to things and people. Right to love, grieve, show gratitude and anger, right not to have emotional development blighted by abuse or neglect.	Right to show expression of emotion through all aspects of non-verbal communication. Right to have freedom for emotional development in participating in physical activity
Practical reason	Right to decide oneself on what is good and to engage in critical reflection regarding planning one's x	Right to be involved in physical activity as an option for life-style planning
Affiliation	Right to engage in various forms of social-interaction. Right to develop self-respect as of equal worth as others.	Right to engage with others in physical activity contexts and to be respected for this involvement. Right to engage in culturally valued activities.
Other species and the natural world	Right to demonstrate concern for nature	Right to be involved in physical activity to experience interaction with the world of nature
Play	Right to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities	Right to be involved in physical activity as a rewarding, self-affirming experience and as a recreational activity
Control over one's environment	Right to participate in political choices including free speech. Right to own property. Right to seek employment	Right to have a say in decisions about provision of facilities and practitioner support in relation to physical activity.
Physical Literacy	Right to develop embodied acuity, embracing embodied potential as of value in its own right, affording the interaction with the world that is unique to this human domain.	

Further study would reveal that significance of embodied acuity varies in respect of different central capabilities. The realisation of embodied acuity alongside the agency to draw on this human potential can be described as Physical literacy. In this context every individual has the right to develop physical literacy described as a positive disposition to engage in life-long physical activity.

Len continually made new links to concepts that furthered the merit of physical literacy. In his exploration of purpose and meaning in life he encouraged us to find yet another field that draws correlations between engagement in physical activity and increased purpose and meaning. This research supports the credibility and need for physical literacy as a concept that not only nurtures engagement in physical activity for life but also as a concept that capitalises on the relationship between physical activity, meaning and purpose and thus is central in promoting human flourishing.

Eudaimonia in Adolescence and Physical Literacy

Eudaimonia and adolescence are two terms that many might find hard to associate with one another. Adolescence is an incredibility complex and multidimensional developmental period in an individual's life. Adolescents rapidly face cognitive, social and physical changes, making them popular subjects to study for health, well-being and development. Creating environments whereby individuals navigating adolescence can thrive and flourish both during and beyond this period is worthy cause for research. Len drew our attention to positive youth development and the eudaimonic identity theory which identifies three key developmental elements: self-defining activities, personal expressiveness and goal-directed behaviours. However if any of these elements are to come to fruition individuals must first have a sense of autonomy. Autonomy is key in being able to pursue self-directed/defining activities, being able to freely express oneself and take action towards personal goals.

Autonomy supportive environments induce greater intrinsic motivation, curiosity and a desire for challenge, whilst students who are overly controlled lose initiative and learn less well (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Reeve, 2002). Autonomy supportive environments provide opportunities to co-construct learning experiences responding to student voice and encourages learners to take responsibility for and become actively engaged in their own learning.

Encouraging individual autonomy during adolescence enables individuals to flourish in two ways, firstly by providing opportunities for individuals to pursue self-defining activities, personal expressiveness and goal-directed behaviours. And secondly, by promoting the taking of responsibility and therefore the valuing of engagement in physical activity for life. The contribution that practices in physical education can make to enhancing quality of life during this critical period of life has perhaps attracted insufficient attention by the IPLA, however, building on Len's views, the Association should consider this area further in its recommendations for learning /teaching approaches with these young people.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to pick up a number of areas of study on which Len was working. In this chapter we focus on human flourishing. We took a broad perspective at the start of our piece and then homed in on particular aspects such as self-acceptance, purpose in life and eudaimonia in adolescence. There is no doubt that Len's fertile thinking and challenging views have been and still are influencing the work of the IPLA and the development of the concept of physical literacy.

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