



MEPA
MIDDLE EAST
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



MEPA
POSITIVE
PSYCHOLOGY

INSIGHTS — INTO — WELLBEING

A GUIDED JOURNEY TOWARD HUMAN FLOURISHING

SERIES 1, ISSUE 1 • JULY 2026

*Every connection. Every story.
Every step builds a stronger foundation.*



RESEARCH



EDUCATION



WELLBEING



COMMUNITY



INNOVATION



CULTURE



*Rooted in science. Growing together.
Flourishing across the Middle East and beyond.*



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the First Edition of MEPA's Positive Psychology Division Newsletter

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the inaugural edition of our Positive Psychology Newsletter. This publication represents an exciting new chapter for our association's division and reflects our ongoing commitment to advancing psychological knowledge, fostering professional connection, and promoting wellbeing throughout our communities.

MEPA's Positive Psychology Division was established to celebrate and explore the factors that help individuals, families, organizations, and societies thrive. Through this newsletter, we hope to create a vibrant platform that showcases the diversity, creativity, and expertise of our professional community while highlighting the many ways wellbeing and flourishing are being cultivated across the Middle East.

Each edition will feature contributions from psychologists and professionals within our association, offering a rich collection of articles, reflections, poems, practical insights, highlights of innovative initiatives, and discussions of emerging research in positive psychology, wellbeing, education, resilience, and human flourishing. By bringing together different voices, perspectives, and experiences, we hope to encourage meaningful dialogue and inspire new ideas that can enrich both our professional practice and our everyday lives.

One of the greatest strengths of our association is the wealth of knowledge and talent represented within our membership body.



This newsletter provides an opportunity to learn from one another, share our experiences, celebrate achievements, and strengthen the sense of community that connects us as professionals dedicated to improving the wellbeing of others.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of the contributors who have generously shared their expertise and passion in this first edition and especially to the head of our Division, Dr. Saddiga Al Ghalib, for her great initiative and passion. I also warmly welcome our readers and invite you to engage with the content, reflect on the ideas presented, and consider contributing your own voice to future editions.

Together, let us continue to build a community that values growth, connection, creativity, and the science of human flourishing. I look forward to the conversations, collaborations, and learning that this newsletter will inspire.

Warm regards,
Dr. Joanne Hands, PhD, LPC, LMFT
President, Middle East Psychological Association
(MEPA)

LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF THE DIVISION

Dear readers,

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter. As I reflect on the incredible engagement and shared wisdom from our recent events, I am filled with immense gratitude. It was a true pleasure to connect with colleagues and participants from so many diverse backgrounds and experiences.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Middle East Psychological Association (MEPA) for its generous support and encouragement, and to all the contributors and participants for their presence and efforts.

In times of uncertainty, we often seek grounding and meaning. When clarity fades, meaning acts as an anchor, helping us remain oriented, purposeful, and connected to what matters most.

True resilience is not about hardening against adversity, but rather the flexibility to bend like a plant in the wind and the capacity to grow through challenges. Research consistently highlights that meaning and supportive relationships are our most vital protective resources.

Human beings typically navigate uncertainty through four complementary pathways:

Connection: Relying on family, friends, and community.

Meaning: Rooting ourselves in spirituality, values, and purpose.

Movement: Caring for the body and regulating stress.

Reflection: Engaging in contemplation, learning, and self-awareness.

While some responses offer only temporary relief, others cultivate enduring strength. Distinguishing between the two is essential. Furthermore, well-being is not solely an individual task; it is shaped by our communities and the systems around us. We build resilience by supporting one another, learning from difficulty, and collectively choosing hope over helplessness.

As Head of the Positive Psychology Division, I believe that positive change remains possible even in the most difficult times. Our task is not to eliminate uncertainty, but to respond to it with humanity and intentional action. Sometimes, resilience is not about a dramatic comeback, but simply continuing the movement forward.

Ultimately, uncertainty teaches us that we are part of a larger human story. By choosing to act with purpose and compassion, we sustain our humanity in changing times. We are still here, and in that persistence lies the power to shape a better future.

Dr. Saddiga AlGhalib,
Head,
Positive Psychology Division,
Middle East Psychological
Association (MEPA)





How to Explore This Newsletter

Welcome to The Hidden Roots.

This first edition has been designed as both a journey and a collection of conversations. You may choose to read the newsletter from beginning to end, following the story as it unfolds through vision, partnerships, research, education, wellbeing, community initiatives, and reflection. Alternatively, you may begin wherever your interests lead you.

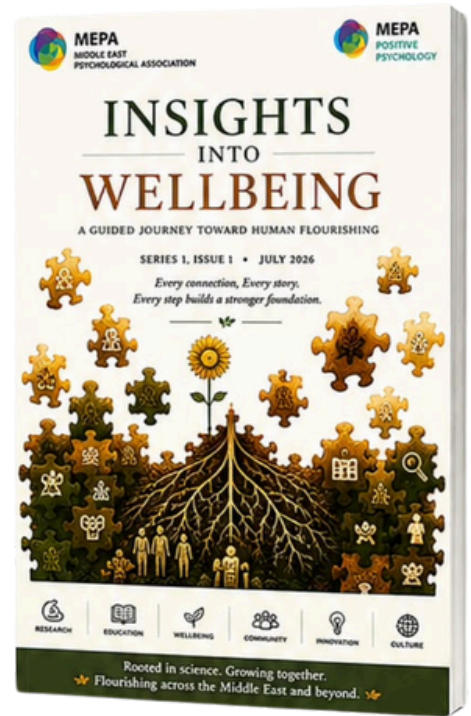
The Table of Contents is fully interactive, allowing you to click on any section and explore the topics that matter most to you before returning to continue your journey.

There is no single path through these pages. Wherever you begin, we hope you discover ideas, experiences, and connections that inspire reflection, learning, and growth.

The roots are forming.

Every flourishing community begins beneath the surface.

The Meaning Behind the Cover



The cover of this first edition, The Hidden Roots, reflects the journey of building a flourishing community.

Scattered across the page are puzzle pieces containing glimpses of the stories, initiatives, partnerships, research, conversations, and acts of service featured throughout this newsletter. At first glance, the pieces may appear separate. Yet each represents an important contribution to a larger vision. As the pieces begin to connect, they reveal the roots of a sunflower emerging beneath the soil.

The roots symbolize the foundations of flourishing: relationships, learning, wellbeing, community, purpose, faith, and collaboration. While roots are often hidden from view, they provide the strength and nourishment needed for future growth. This first newsletter celebrates those foundations. It is not the story of a finished achievement, but the story of beginnings.

In future editions, the sunflower will continue to grow. New shoots and leaves will emerge as partnerships deepen, ideas develop, and our community expands.

In the final edition of this series, the sunflower will bloom, representing the collective impact of many individuals working together to promote wellbeing, positive psychology, and human flourishing.

For now, we honor what is growing beneath the surface.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

6

ROOT ONE : Vision and Foundations

- [Goals](#)
- [Strategic Pillars](#)

9

ROOT TWO : Building Connections

- [Collaborations & Partnerships](#)
- [From Reflection to Action: Resilience Webinar Spotlight](#)
- [Mental Health Awareness Month Webinar Series](#)

13

ROOT THREE : Learning and Discovery

- [Mapping Resilience: What the Empirical Data Tells Us About Our Community](#)
- [Leadership Perspective](#)
- [Education Perspective](#)
- [Wellbeing Perspective](#)

29

ROOT FOUR – Community Voices

- [Student Voice](#)
- [The Endowment Library](#)

34

ROOT FIVE – Meaning and Reflection

- [Poetry Corner - Two Parallel Roads](#)

38

ROOT SIX – Looking Forward

- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Acknowledgement](#)
- [A Gentle Invitation](#)



ROOT ONE



Vision
and
Foundations

*“Every great tree begins
with a clear vision and strong roots.”*



Goals



01

Advance Rigorous Research

- Promote and support scientific research in Positive Psychology across the Middle East.
- Develop and validate culturally relevant Arabic scales, including Positive Islamic Psychology measures.



02

Translate Science into Practice

- Bring research findings into education, community, organizational, and clinical settings.
- Provide practical toolkits, interventions, and training for professionals and the public.



03

Promote Positive Education

- Integrate wellbeing science into schools and universities.
- Train educators and support ministries of education in building flourishing learning environments.



04

Foster Wellbeing & Mental Health Awareness

- Reduce stigma around mental health.
- Promote prevention, resilience, and self-care across the lifespan.



05

Build Regional and Global Partnerships

- Collaborate with universities, ministries, NGOs, and international bodies (IPPA, UNESCO, WHO, PPN).
- Position MEPA as the regional hub of Positive Psychology in the Arab world.



06

Innovate with Technology and Culture

- Explore AI and digital tools for wellbeing.
- Contribute unique cultural perspectives through Positive Islamic Psychology, art, spirituality, and community values.

Strategic Pillars



01

Positive Education



- Flourishing schools and universities, teacher training, youth wellbeing.



02

Positive Wellbeing & Mental Health



- Preventive programs, resilience, awareness campaigns, mental health literacy.



03

Positive Communities & Organizations

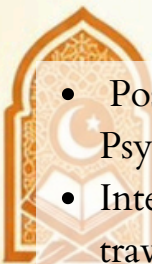


- Workplace flourishing leadership, family wellbeing, and community resilience.



04

Positive Culture & Spirituality



- Positive Islamic Psychology.
- Integration of art, writing, travel, cooking, and cultural heritage into wellbeing.



05

Positive Innovation



- AI and digital wellbeing tools.
- Development of local Arabic measurement scales and validated assessments.





ROOT TWO



Building Connections



Collaborations & Partnerships

At MEPA, we believe that through working together we can create something more powerful and impactful than individual efforts. We are proud to announce that we have signed three new strategic collaborations. These partnerships mark a significant step forward in our mission to foster a more resilient and thriving society across the Middle East. While each agreement is distinct, all three reflect a shared commitment to advancing positive psychology through evidence-based practice, innovation, and cultural sensitivity.

Our New Collaborative Partners

- **Happiness Matters Program:**

Happiness Matters is an initiative spearheaded by Dr. Louise Lambert in the UAE. It applies the science of positive psychology to help individuals and institutions develop evidence-based skills that improve health, performance, and life satisfaction.

- **Arab Flourishing Network:**

The Arab Flourishing Network is a professional platform established by Ms. Nouf Al-Junaibi in the UAE. It aims to connect Arab talent and expertise from around the world. It was founded in the belief that collaboration among professionals is one of the most effective paths to fostering flourishing and well-being across Arab communities. The network is affiliated with the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, enabling the integration of local expertise with global insights and research while strengthening the presence of the Arab voice in this field.

happinessmatters

الشبكة العربية للازدهار
Arab Flourishing Network



- **Positive Psychology MENA:**

Ppmena is a pioneering community and professional network in Saudi Arabia. It was formed by Ms. Tamara Qazzaz and is dedicated to localizing the science of well-being. Its core mission is to move beyond the "one-size-fits-all" approach of Western psychology and create a culturally resonant framework for the MENA region.

The aim of these collaborations is to combine our scientific expertise, resources and networks to build a sustainable hub of excellence, ultimately enhancing the wellbeing of communities across the Middle East.

From Reflection to Action: Resilience Webinar Spotlight

The Middle East Psychological Association (MEPA) and its Positive Psychology Division successfully hosted a webinar titled "Mental Health and Wellbeing in Rapidly Changing Times" on April 24, 2026. It was conducted via Zoom and was free to attend. This webinar provided a vital platform for reflection, resilience, and evidence-based support during periods of regional uncertainty. The session aimed to bridge the gap between psychological science and daily life, equipping attendees, including families, educators, and professionals, with practical tools to navigate stress and anxiety.

Expert Speakers & Sessions

The webinar featured the following speakers and their respective sessions:

- **Dr. Joanne Hands** (President, MEPA): Provided the welcome remarks.
- **Dr. Saddiga Al Ghalib** (Head, Positive Psychology Division, MEPA): Presented the opening reflection, "Meaning, Resilience, and the Human Response to Uncertainty".
- **Dr. Louise Lambert** (Psychologist, Consultant, Professor): Led Session 1 titled "Phase 2: From Reaction to Action".
- **Dr. Vedrana Mladina** (Clinical Psychologist, MEPA Vice President): Led Session 2 titled "Managing Stress and Anxiety in Uncertain Times".
- **Dr. Toni Sawma** (Clinical Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Assistant Professor): Led Session 3 titled "Understanding the Mental Toll of the Ongoing Crisis: Coping Strategies for Uncertain Times—The Lebanese Experience".

The Mental Health and Wellbeing in Rapidly Changing Times webinar was more than a conversation; it was a reminder of the strength and hope that emerges when people come together in uncertain times. The session created space not only for learning, but for courage, reflection, and renewal. By bringing together clinical expertise and practical coping strategies, the event moved beyond fear and towards resilience and purposeful action. It served as a reminder that even in times of uncertainty, healing, connection, and hope remain possible when we face challenges together.



Mental Health Awareness Month Webinar Series

In celebration of Mental Health Awareness Month, the MEPA Positive Psychology Division organized a webinar series throughout May. It featured three insightful conversations focused on new perspectives on wellbeing. The series aimed to offer reflection, connection, and understanding for those facing uncertainty.

Below is a summary of the featured speakers and their topics:

Dr. Saddiga Al Ghalib

- **Topic:** Reflections on Meaning, Resilience, and Human Responses to Uncertainty: Activating Cultural Strengths in Times of Difficulty.
- **Background:** Head of the Positive Psychology Division at MEPA, Dr. Al Ghalib holds a PhD in Educational Psychology. Her work focuses on reating culturally and spiritually grounded pathways to support human flourishing.

Ms. Tamara Gazzaz

- **Topic:** Resilience for Humanity.
- **Background:** Founder of Ppmena (Positive Psychology in the MENA region), she is a transformational coach and researcher dedicated to localizing the science of wellbeing to fit the region's cultural and spiritual heritage.

Ms. Hanan Fadlon

- **Topic:** The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing: Opportunities, Risks, and Future Directions.
- **Background:** A Positive Psychology and wellbeing advocate, and an expert in AI and human psychology. She holds dual master's degrees from Columbia University and Westminster University and is a thought leader in bridging human psychology and technology.





ROOT THREE



Learning and Discovery



*“The roots of learning
are bitter, but the fruit
is sweet.”*



Mapping Resilience: What the Empirical Data Tells Us About Our Community

- Dr. Saddiga Al Ghalib

Dear Members and Friends,

As we continuously work to deepen our understanding of wellbeing, connection, and psychological strength, data serves as a powerful mirror. Recently, we finalized a comprehensive community-based research survey evaluating how individuals process deep uncertainty, navigate acute challenges, and cultivate mental endurance. From a psychometric standpoint, the 10-item scale utilized achieved an exceptional Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.89, confirming that our instrument precisely and consistently captured the core psychological dimensions of coping. When we analyzed the data further through multiple linear regression and group comparisons, a profound, beautifully distinct narrative emerged about the internal and external architecture of our community.

Literature Review: De-Westernizing Resilience

In mainstream psychological literature, resilience is often evaluated through Western-centric lenses emphasizing individual cognitive self-regulation, executive functioning, and reliance on formal institutional structures (Connor & Davidson, 2003). However, contemporary developments in global mental health stress

that coping mechanisms are deeply localized and culturally constructed.

Within the framework of Islamic Positive Psychology (IPP), coping operates as an active cognitive-affective mechanism rather than a passive retreat. It is structurally tethered to intrinsic concepts such as Tawakkul (divine trust), Sabr (patient perseverance), and Husnuzhan (maintaining positive assumptions toward God's decree) (Al-Ghazali; Khoiriyah & Mufid, 2026). Recent regional studies confirm that internal spiritual alignment acts as a powerful buffer against existential stress, directly predicting high levels of emotional stability and post-adversity growth (Shahama et al., 2022; Al Eid et al., 2026). Our research builds directly upon this foundation by examining the exact empirical engines that drive community coping capacity, comparing internal personal agency directly against external systemic trust.

Significant Results: The Three Pillars of Our Coping Architecture

1. The Spiritual Anchor

- **Mean Score:** 4.82 / 5.00 — Strongest Universal Consensus

By an overwhelming margin, Prayer and Spiritual Practice emerged as the absolute

highest anchor for resilience. Through the lens of Islamic Positive Psychology (IPP), faith operates not as a passive retreat, but as an active framework for cognitive-affective restructuring and immediate emotional self-regulation, validating the regional assertions of Abdel-Khalek & Tekke (2019).

2. High Personal Agency & Cognitive Reframing

- **Active Acceptance:** 4.45
- **Meaning-Making:** 4.38

Our community exhibits incredible internal stamina. Multiple linear regression revealed that Meaning-Making (Cognitive Reframing) and Spiritual Beliefs were the only statistically significant predictors of overall resilience. Instead of falling into helplessness, individuals actively look for growth and lessons within adversity, leaning heavily into proactive character strengths.

3. The Paradox: The Community Support Gap

- **Professional Advice:** 3.12
- **Broader Community Support:** 2.95

While internal, spiritual, and immediate family reliance (4.22) remain exceptionally robust, scores dropped dramatically when shifting outward. This reveals a critical paradox: high individual and spiritual resilience coexists alongside lower public or institutional trust, echoing regional data from King Saud University researchers (2024).

Future Recommendations: Closing the Gap

- **Integrate Culturally Resonant Frameworks:** Mental health practitioners must design interventions that explicitly honor and integrate spiritual coping mechanisms—such as gratitude (Shukr) and positive divine assumptions (Husnuzhan), acknowledging them as primary metrics for emotional regulation.

- **Bridge the Institutional Trust Deficit:** Because broader community trust scored lowest (2.95), we must work intentionally to cultivate spaces of psychological safety outside the home. By building trustworthy, culturally attuned grassroots networks, we can transform the broader community into an accessible safety net.
- **Elevate 'The Power of Connection':** Our upcoming initiatives must focus heavily on systemic resilience—moving from individual survival to collective flourishing, ensuring our professional ecosystems match our community's profound internal strength.

References

- Al Eid, S., et al. (2026). Religiosity, Psychological Resilience, and Mental Health Patterns within Regional Ecosystems. *Global Psych Journal*, 14(2), 112-125.
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. Ihya 'Ulum al-Din (The Revivification of the Religious Sciences). Vol 4.
- Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety*, 18(2), 76-82.
- Khoiriyah, L., & Mufid, A. (2026). Husnuzhan-Based Interventions and Adaptive Character Formation. *International Journal of Islamic Positive Psychology*, 3(2), 89-104.
- King Saud University Mental Health Group. (2024). Barriers to seeking professional psychological advice in urban community samples. *Arabian Journal of Psychiatry*, 35(1), 12-28.
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Shahama, F., et al. (2022). Deepening Monotheistic Conviction as a Predictor of Inner Peace and Post-Adversity Growth. *Sufi Journal of Affective Science*, 11(2), 77-93.

Resilience for Humanity

PPMENA (Positive Psychology Middle East and North Africa) has launched two regional initiatives - “Resilience for Humanity” designed to support human resilience through evidence-based psychological practice, and “Humanity Resilience Collaboration” which unites practitioners, coaches, and wellbeing advocates to address the growing prevalence of stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue across the MENA region. With studies showing daily stress and anxiety levels reaching up to 45% in some areas, this collaboration provides a structured, culturally relevant approach to mental health. PPMENA utilizes the biopsychosocial framework, integrating modern Western science with Eastern cultural perspectives to create holistic programs that support mind, body, and spirit.

The Humanity Resilience Collaboration is grounded in the concept of Psychological Capital, including resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy, as a foundation for personal and professional adaptation. According to its Founder Tamara Gazzaz, fostering this capacity is a strategic imperative for the region’s future. “Resilience is no longer a personal advantage; it is a strategic capability for societies, workplaces, and communities,” Gazzaz stated. “When people have the right psychological foundations, they are better able to lead, work, connect, and recover.” The initiative is built around three strategic pillars: empowering individuals with tools for psychological resilience and emotional intelligence; building human capabilities and strengthening knowledge-sharing among practitioners; and using social media platforms to share credible psychological content with wider audiences across MENA.

PPMENA has opened membership in the Collaboration to specialists, practitioners, coaches, and influential voices in the field of psychological wellbeing from across the region. Through this network, the initiative aims to support a more informed, connected, and resilient wellbeing ecosystem across MENA.

Does it work?

- Mohammed K. S. Al-Haj Baddar

It might work for the better, it might not, it might get stuff worse, and it might work before but not now. I learned that it's all about communication that can be at its best when I seek to understand before trying to be understood, and when I know what/when/where to say/do what to whom. Now as a well-being psychologist, I have learned that activities or interventions in almost all their shapes and variety are basically good, but do they always work and for everybody in all circumstances? Then I learned how crucial it is to consider mediators (i.e. why factors) and moderators (i.e. how factors) in the person-activity fit process. This is why I've become fond of adaptation or what's so called contextualization, and I've become less interested in packages of activities no matter how good-looking they seem.

In this post, I'd love to present a demonstration that represents a brief summary of how person-activity fit process should go inspired by what Sheldon & Elliot (1999); Lyubomirsky & Layous (2013); and recently Biswas-Diener (2023) have done. Generally, in person-centered (i.e. client or learner-centered) communication processes like coaching, counseling, learning, teaching, etc., setting goals, activities, and other processes should be set by both/all sides in a participatory approach. Furthermore, reflection is an ongoing process in order to keep adapting to changes and updates.

For instance, fitter activity(ies) content and form (i.e. variety & frequency; timing & duration; and dosage & intensity) depend on how deeply I understand the targeted person(s) (i.e. biography

& demography; baseline & current situation, social support & perceived social support; and maybe most importantly motivation & discipline). Thus, activity(ies) should be accepting, challenging, and flexible; not cynical, impossible, or rigid so person(s) feels secured (to try), powerful (to work), and open (to many solutions). As a result, there will definitely be wider space for creativity, growth mindset, intrinsic motivation, and "A for effort;" and no space for "one size fits all," fixed mindset, coercion, and toxic positivity.

In the end, whether you are a coach, counselor, therapist, teacher, spouse, parent, friend, or a person communicates, please keep reflecting on what you have said and done and ask yourself: "(HOW) DOES IT WORK?"

References:

- Biswas-Diener, R. (2023). Positive Provocation: 25 Questions to Elevate Your Coaching Practice. Berrett-Koehler.
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How Do Simple Positive Activities Increase Well-Being? Current Directions in Psychological Science, 22(1), 57-62.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412469809>
- Sheldon, K. M., & Elliot, A. J. (1999). Goal striving, need satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: The self-concordance model. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76(3), 482-497.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.3.482>

Flourishing in the Classroom

Positive Education, Mental Well-Being, and What Arab-Context Schools Can Learn from Finland

- Katarzyna Hanula-Bobbitt

What do we most want for the young people in our schools? Academic results matter, of course. But most educators, parents, and policymakers would also say they want children who are resilient, kind, purposeful, and well. Positive education is the field that takes that ambition seriously and translates it into everyday classroom practice.

What Positive Education Actually Means

Positive education can be understood as teaching for both traditional skills *and* for happiness (Seligman et al., 2009). It does not pretend that students never struggle, fail, or feel lost. Instead, it equips them with the tools to cope, grow, and find meaning in their learning.

The most widely used framework for thinking about this is the PERMA-H model (Seligman, 2011; Norrish et al., 2013):

Positive emotion (gratitude, joy, optimism);
Engagement (deep interest in learning);
Relationships (warm, supportive connections with peers and teachers);
Meaning (a sense of purpose);
Accomplishment (pride in effort and growth); and
Health (physical and mental well-being).

These are not abstract ideals each element can be translated into simple, concrete routines that teachers can try without overhauling the curriculum.

What Finland Can Teach Us

Finland's schools are admired globally for producing high outcomes while maintaining relatively low levels of student stress (Sahlberg, 2011). One important reason is the way well-being is woven into the fabric of everyday schooling, not as a branded programme, but as a set of professional habits and cultural norms.

In practice, this means teachers habitually notice and name students' strengths rather than only correcting their mistakes. It means lessons begin with brief moments of calm or reflection like a few deep breaths, a quick gratitude share etc. before moving into content. It means timetables are designed to protect time for play, movement, and genuine human connection, not only content delivery. Research confirms that this approach works: data from PISA 2022 shows that over 80% of Finnish students report feeling happy and safe at school, a rate significantly higher than most OECD countries (OECD, 2023).

The Finnish approach also illustrates a broader truth that research increasingly supports: well-being and learning are not in competition. Students who feel emotionally safe, seen, and connected are more motivated, more engaged, and more likely to persevere when learning becomes difficult (Duan et al., 2020).

From Theory to the Classroom: First Steps That Work

Implementing positive education does not require a dramatic overhaul. It works best when schools start small and build gradually. A few approaches teachers can introduce tomorrow:

- **Gratitude and strengths routines.** End each week with a brief "gratitude circle" in which students share one thing they

appreciated: about school, a classmate, or their week. Use strengths-based feedback in marking: rather than pointing only to errors, acknowledge what a student's approach reveals about their thinking before moving to the correction.

- **Emotional literacy.** Teach students to name and express their feelings using simple tools like emotion check-ins or mood scales. Create a quiet corner where students can reflect or speak with a trusted adult when they need to.
- **Meaning-connected learning.** Link lesson content to real-life questions: *How might this knowledge help you or your community? * Invite students to design small service projects, supporting younger pupils, organising a community clean-up, or writing letters of appreciation to school staff.

Rooting Positive Education in Arab and Islamic Values

Positive education is not a one-size-fits-all export. Applied thoughtfully in Arab-context schools, it becomes most powerful when it draws on local values and Islamic teachings rather than being imported wholesale from another cultural context.

The connections are natural and rich. Gratitude maps directly onto the Islamic concept of "shukr" thankfulness to God and appreciation for family and community. Patience and forgiveness are already central moral teachings that also happen to be the essence of emotional regulation and resilience. Service and meaning can be cultivated through projects that care for the local community: visiting those who are elderly or ill, helping neighbours, or contributing to charitable initiatives.

Research from Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, reinforces

this point clearly. A study examining the implementation of positive education in Emirati schools found that programmes anchored in Islamic moral education and family values were significantly more likely to be accepted by teachers, students, and parents (Nelson et al., 2022). The key insight is not to copy any model exactly, but to use it as a framework for local adaptation — one that respects what communities already know and value.

Honest Challenges, and the Way Forward

None of this is without difficulty. Teachers already carry heavy workloads, and adding new expectations can feel overwhelming. Some school leaders worry that time devoted to well-being will come at the cost of academic achievement. Both concerns deserve to be taken seriously.

The evidence, however, points in the other direction. Schools that invest in well-being tend to see improvements in engagement and learning, not declines (Clarke, 2020; Duan et al., 2020). The task is not to choose between well-being and achievement, but to build the conditions in which both can flourish together.

Practically, schools can begin by piloting positive education in one classroom or year group, then sharing what they learn. Short, practical professional development peer coaching, shared lesson plans, a focused workshop, is far more sustainable than long theoretical courses. And engaging parents from the outset, explaining the goals clearly in terms of raising resilient, respectful, and purposeful young people, helps build the trust that any meaningful school change requires.

An Invitation

Positive education is not a magic solution, but it is a clear and hopeful direction. By drawing on

the insights of Finland's well-being-focused schools and grounding them in the rich values of Arab and Islamic educational traditions, teachers can create classrooms where students feel known, supported, and motivated.

The question is no longer whether our schools should care about students' well-being. It is how in daily routines, in the way we give feedback, in the way we structure time, and in the values we choose to make visible, we will demonstrate that care in practice. Every thoughtful step in that direction counts.

References

- Clarke, T. (2020). Children's wellbeing and their academic achievement: The dangerous discourse of 'trade-offs' in education. *Theory and Research in Education*, 18*(3), 263–294.
- Duan, W., Chen, Z., & Ho, S. M. Y. (2020). Editorial: Positive education: Theory, practice, and evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11*, 427. Al Eid, S., et al. (2026). Religiosity, Psychological Resilience, and Mental Health Patterns within Regional Ecosystems. *Global Psych Journal*, 14(2), 112-125.
- Al-Ghazali, A. H. Ihya 'Ulum al-Din (The Revivification of the Religious Sciences). Vol 4.
- Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety*, 18(2), 76–82.
- Khoiriyah, L., & Mufid, A. (2026). Husnuzhan-Based Interventions and Adaptive Character Formation. *International Journal of Islamic Positive Psychology*, 3(2), 89–104.
- King Saud University Mental Health Group. (2024). Barriers to seeking professional psychological advice in urban community samples. *Arabian Journal of Psychiatry*, 35(1), 12–28.
- Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5–14.
- Shahama, F., et al. (2022). Deepening Monotheistic Conviction as a Predictor of Inner Peace and Post-Adversity Growth. *Sufi Journal of Affective Science*, 11(2), 77–93.
- Nelson Christensen, A., Jules, T. D., & Mayworm, A. M. (2022). The State of Positive Education in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE (Policy Paper No. 56). Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research.
- Norrish, J. M., Williams, P., O'Connor, M., & Robinson, J. (2013). An applied framework for positive education. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 3*(2), 147–161.
- OECD. (2023). PISA 2022 Results (Volume I and II) - Country Notes: Finland https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i-and-ii-country-notes_ed6fbcc5-en/finland_6991e849-en.html
- Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* Teachers College Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Ernst, R. M., Gillham, J., Reivich, K., & Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: Positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35*(3), 293–311.

AI, Psych, & Edu

- Mohammed K. S. Al-Haj Baddar

As a well-being psychologist, I'm living the 3rd wave of PP (i.e. well-being science) that Lomas et al. (2021) described as complex whereas there are expansions in scope and in methods. AI appears here as a part of the computational method that may include im/explicit and qual/quantitative methods. E.G. AI can contribute to crafting personal narrative identities from the individuals' thoughts and biography, and thus to planning interventions (Blyler et al., 2023). Yet, there might be some more contributors to be accurate! To be effective, I believe that PPIs (i.e. well-being activities) need to consider mediators (why factors) and moderators (how factors) in the person-activity fit process (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Similarly, I think that why and how we use AI tools mediate and moderate what kind of impact we will have from using them.

Now as an educational psychologist, I am living the trend that the APA considers on top of trends in 2025 whereby Abrams (Jan 1, 2025) titled her article: "Classrooms are adapting to the use of artificial intelligence: Psychologists can help maximize the smart adoption of these tools to enhance learning." In addition to the classroom use of generative AI tools and popularity amongst students, she briefs that educational psychologists are still studying how AI tools can be used safely and effectively, including to support SEL. Elsewhere, Harvard's Center for Digital Thriving presented in its website that technology is both helpful and harmful; energizing and exhausting; connecting and dividing. And technology is multifaceted, so their approach needs to be, too. Consequently, they present their research and resources in terms of being optimistic (i.e. solutions-minded,

future-oriented and genuinely hopeful) and critical (i.e. paying thoughtful attention to the harms as well as benefits).

In April 2025, I attended a webinar on creativity and innovation in education by RCEP. All sessions were good, but the very last one was sweet. Kyoungwon Seo, an assistant professor from the department of AI, SeoulTech, presented a brief on how when AI thinks for you. In summary of his studies (Jin, et al., 2023; Lee, et al., 2025; Seo, et al., 2021; 2024), although AI improves communication at a large scale, and personalized and self-regulated learning, there were concerns about responsibility, agency, surveillance, and motivation in which learners might over rely on AI (i.e. learners might diminish critical and creative thinking). Here comes the importance of having Augmented Teachers (K-12 teachers) who need AI as a complementary role in personalized learning; who consider learners' identity, activeness, and position; and who guide learners to move from passively relying on AI to deliberately search, operate, and elaborate in an active, constructive, interactive use of it.

It's really a fortune when we know why and how it is used.

References

- Abrams, Zara. (Jan 1, 2025). Classrooms are adapting to the use of artificial intelligence: Psychologists can help maximize the smart adoption of these tools to enhance learning. APA. Emerging Trends. Vol. 56, No. 1. Print version: page 70. Retrieved from: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2025/01/trend-s-classrooms-artificial-intelligence>

- Blyler, A. P., Lambert, L., Omar, O., & King, S. (2023). Perspectives: Applications of Blyler and Seligman's (2023) findings for the Middle East/North Africa. *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9(1), 46–49. Retrieved from: <https://www.middleeastjournalofpositivepsychology.org/index.php/mejpp/article/view/161/155>
- Harvard's Center for Digital Thriving (Website): <https://digitalthriving.gse.harvard.edu/>
- Jin, SH., Im, K., Yoo, M., Roll, I., & Seo, K. (2023). Supporting students' self-regulated learning in online learning using artificial intelligence applications. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ* 20, 37. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00406-5>
- Lee, D., Lee, S., Fels, S., & Kyoungwon Seo, K. (2025). How Students' Self-Regulated Learning Abilities Influence Intents and Engagement Goals in Chatbot-Assisted Writing. *CHI EA '25. Association for Computing Machinery*, 323, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3706599.3719911>
- Lomas, T., Waters, L., Williams, P., Oades, L. G., & Kern, M. L. (2021). Third wave positive psychology: Broadening towards complexity. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 16(5), 660–674.
- <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1805501>
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 57–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412469809>
- RCEP (April, 2025). Renewing Education through Creativity and Innovation. Video Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRNngngJwKUQ&t=8221s> (Kyoungwon Seo's session: 2:00:00 – 2:17:00)
- Seo, K., Tang, J., Roll, I., Fels, S., & Yoon, D. (2021). The impact of artificial intelligence on learner–instructor interaction in online learning. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ* 18, 54. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00292-9>
- Seo, K., Yoo, M., Dodson, S., & Jin, S. H. (2024). Augmented teachers: K–12 teachers' needs for artificial intelligence's complementary role in personalized learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15391523.2024.2330525>



Artificial Intelligence and the Psychological Demands of the Modern Era

- Hanan Fadlon

Contemporary society stands at a critical juncture, confronting a techno-social paradigm governed by entirely novel operational parameters. The current epoch is defined by the exponential advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) a domain that yields profound socio-economic opportunities alongside intricate systemic risks. Although the theoretical foundations of AI date back to the 1950s, the velocity, scale, and transformative capacity of recent technological breakthroughs are historically unprecedented.

The intensification of human-technology collaboration has been primarily mediated through virtual environments. This digital transition was acutely accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which enforced physical deceleration while mandating a rapid reliance on digital infrastructure for communication, productivity, and operational continuity.

Consequently, this crisis served as a catalyst for sustained technological innovation, optimising digital workflows and reshaping human behavioural patterns.

As a result of these rapid transformations, AI has emerged as a focal point of geopolitical and academic discourse. However, these advancements have simultaneously generated critical anxieties regarding their long-term impact on public health, psychological stability, and social welfare. Nations now engage in intense geo-strategic competition to secure computational hegemony and dominate the evolving technological landscape.

Navigating this global shift requires a synchronised response from a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including governments, supranational organisations, civil society, legal scholars, and behavioural scientists. The pace of regulatory and ethical framework development must match the velocity of technological innovation. There is an urgent imperative to establish robust governance models that embed ethical principles, human-centric values, and social responsibility into enforceable legislation, pedagogical curricula, professional training paradigms, and international standards (Putica, 2025). Such measures are essential to safeguard contemporary populations and future generations from the latent psychological, sociological, and physiological vulnerabilities associated with prolonged human-machine interaction.

While capitalising on the affordances of AI is necessary, mitigating its volatile, non-linear risks is equally critical. Absent rigorous, proactive governance, the unmitigated trajectory of super-intelligent systems could introduce existential vulnerabilities to humanity. Therefore, modern institutions must cultivate a generation capable of leveraging technological tools utility-maximally, while systematically preserving emotional intelligence, interpersonal cohesion, and psychological homeostasis.

A critical dimension of the current technological shift is the pervasive reliance on AI-driven modalities for linguistic translation, automated error correction, synthetic image generation, natural language processing, and automated content creation. While these tools optimise operational efficiency, excessive behavioural dependence risks inducing cognitive offloading, the practice of using external tools to reduce internal cognitive demand (Yu, 2026).

This phenomenon may attenuate engagement

in higher-order executive functions, including critical evaluation, complex problem-solving, autonomous decision-making, strategic planning, working memory, and divergent creativity (Lodge, 2026). Over time, prolonged cognitive offloading may alter neuro-cognitive efficiency, inducing a "speedup illusion" where individuals feel more efficient but display reduced intrinsic capacity to process complex information and navigate novel problem spaces independently (Yu, 2026).

Furthermore, over-reliance on algorithmic mediation introduces profound psychosocial liabilities. In institutional and interpersonal contexts, the substitution of human agency with algorithmic logic threatens to erode social trust and exacerbate collective alienation and social isolation. Deferring emotional and reflective practices to automated applications can paradoxically result in cognitive overload, severe anxiety stemming from hyper-monitoring, and the eventual erosion of baseline human introspection (Chirayath, 2025).

This prolonged activation of the nervous system can catalyse or worsen chronic somatic pathologies, including hypertension, type-2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (CVD). While AI applications are increasingly used to clinically predict and manage hypertension and precision cardiology (Varzideh, 2025a, 2025b), the socio-technical stress of unmitigated daily AI dependence functions as a major psychosomatic risk factor. Ultimately, this bio-psychosocial strain disrupts the individual's psychological relationship with the self and destabilises broader community cohesion.

AI is poised to fundamentally reconfigure international policy architectures and global diplomatic relations. While its net contribution to macroeconomic productivity may ultimately eclipse its systemic liabilities,

societies must maintain a state of analytical vigilance regarding its trajectory. The socio-technical footprint of AI spans across all critical sectors: Education, healthcare, media, scientific research, politics, governance, culture, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, supply-chain logistics, and global trade configurations.

Consequently, AI serves as an architectural driver in shifting the balance of global economic power. In highly developed economies characterised by robust digital infrastructure and substantial capital reserves, AI integration is expected to generate novel, high-value employment sectors. Conversely, this asymmetric transition presents severe challenges for developing nations. Lacking the requisite financial capital, computational resources, and educational infrastructure, these regions face the acute risk of further marginalisation, widening the digital and economic divide between the Global North and Global South (Xiong et al., 2024).

Additionally, the capacity of AI to manipulate public discourse represents a critical challenge for democratic stability. Utilising advanced algorithms, internet protocols, and social media ecosystems, AI systems can execute large-scale psychometric targeting, subtly altering public perception, emotional states, attitudes, and behavioural outcomes. These technological vectors function as highly potent instruments for cognitive warfare, reshaping political landscapes and social dynamics.

To counter this vulnerability, educational paradigms must prioritise algorithmic literacy, media skepticism, and formal critical thinking, thereby equipping citizens to engage with emerging technologies in a manner that supports sustainable human development (Lodge, 2026). At the same time, when integrated within a structured, empathetic

context, certain interactive AI platforms (such as conversational agents) have demonstrated a therapeutic potential to alleviate loneliness and mitigate acute social anxiety, highlighting the dual-use paradox of these technologies (Kim et al., 2025).

As AI systems progress toward greater autonomy, the interdisciplinary scientific community must address several vital questions:

- What are the socio-economic and psychological consequences if segments of society systematically implement policies of technological non-participation or containment?
- To what degree, and through what mechanisms, will pervasive AI integration permanently alter baseline human behavioural and psychological phenotypes?
- What novel paradigms of human evolution, social organisation, and cognitive expansion might emerge from deep, organic human-AI hybridisation?
- What structural mechanisms can ensure absolute transparency, algorithmic explainability, and legal accountability in the design, training, and deployment of complex AI architectures?

Resolving these inquiries necessitates substantial capital allocation toward scientific research, empirical innovation, and rigorous interdisciplinary inquiry. Because state apparatuses alone often lack the specialised agility and resource depth required to address these challenges, public-private research partnerships, international academic consortia, and cross-border regulatory cooperation are essential to establish evidence-based methodologies for responsible human-AI interaction (Xiong et al., 2024).

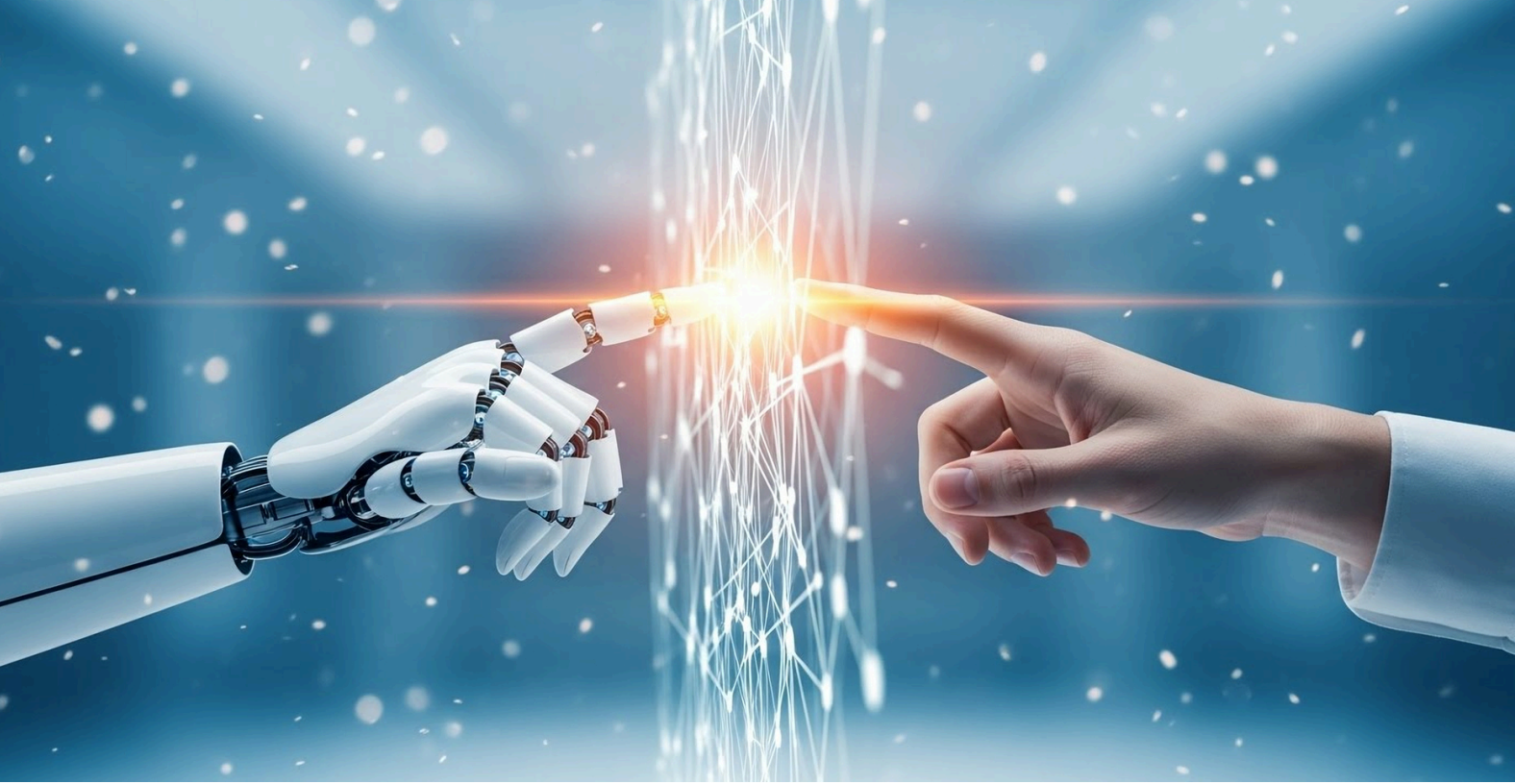
Conclusion:

The mitigation of AI induced systemic risks demands wise, highly coordinated leadership from state governments, supranational organisations, academic institutions, and civil society to implement effective global governance architectures (Xiong et al., 2024).

These regulatory systems must be anchored in deontological ethical principles, universal human values, and an uncompromising respect for human dignity (Hidayatullah, 2025). Such ethical foundations will provide a standardised yet adaptable roadmap, enabling individual nations to synthesise domestic strategies aligned with their distinct cultural and sociological contexts. Ultimately, the trajectory of artificial intelligence must not be dictated by technological capability alone; rather, it must be bound to a collective, enforceable commitment to ensuring that innovation serves to optimise human flourishing, psychological well-being, and sustainable global development.

References

- Chirayath, G. (2025). Cognitive offloading or cognitive overload? How AI alters the mental architecture of coping. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, Article 1699320. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 40
- Hidayatullah, T. (2025). Ethical frameworks for AI-assisted counselling in the digital era. *Ethical Frameworks for AI-Assisted Counselling in the Digital Era*.
- Kim, M., Lee, S., Kim, S., Heo, J., Lee, S., Shin, Y.-B., Cho, C.-H., & Jung, D. (2025). Therapeutic potential of social chatbots in alleviating loneliness and social anxiety: Quasi-experimental mixed methods study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 27, e65589. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 114
- Lodge, J. M. (2026). Artificial intelligence, cognitive offloading and implications for education (UTS Education Futures Report). University of Technology Sydney. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 18
- Putica, A. (2025). Ethical decision-making for AI in mental health: The Integrated Ethical Approach for Computational Psychiatry (IEACP) framework. *Ethical Decision-Making for AI in Mental Health*. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 25
- Varzideh, F. (2025a). Artificial intelligence in cardiovascular medicine: Focus on hypertension. *Artificial Intelligence in Cardiovascular Medicine*. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 4
- Varzideh, F. (2025b). Artificial intelligence in Neurocardiology : Decoding brain–heart network interactions for clinical and translational insights. *Artificial Intelligence in Neurocardiology*. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 3
- Xiong, H., Anderson, B., & Sutherland, E. (2024). Global artificial intelligence (AI) governance, trust, and ethics for sustainable health (GATES). *VeriXiv Protocols*, 1–12. Add a little bit of body text Cited by: 2
- Yu, S. (2026). Cognitive offloading and the speedup illusion in human-AI interaction. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2605.23177*. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2605.23177>



A Question Worth Asking: What Can AI Teach Us About Humanity?

- Dr. Saddiga AlGhalib

As part of a recent exploration of artificial intelligence, wellbeing, and human flourishing, I posed a simple question to two very different groups. The first group consisted of several artificial intelligence systems developed by different organizations. The second group consisted of human participants from different professional and personal backgrounds.

The question was identical:

“What is your perspective on AI and humanity?”

What surprised me was not how different their responses were. It was how often they converged.

The human participants spoke about practical realities. Some described AI as a valuable companion in their daily work. Others highlighted its ability to increase productivity, support learning, improve independence, and create new opportunities.

Several participants expressed concerns about overreliance, declining creativity, ethical risks, and the intentions of those developing these technologies.

The AI systems repeatedly described themselves as tools, mirrors, amplifiers, partners, and collaborators. They repeatedly emphasized that while AI can process information, recognize patterns, and generate content at extraordinary speed, it cannot provide meaning, morality, wisdom, purpose, or responsibility. Those remain uniquely human responsibilities. One of the most striking observations was that nearly every AI system warned about the same risk. Not that machines would become too human. But, that humans might become less human. Several responses cautioned against outsourcing curiosity, judgment, empathy, creativity, and critical thinking to technology.

One AI described itself as a mirror. Another as a telescope. Another as a bicycle. Different metaphors, yet all pointing toward a similar message:

Artificial intelligence may extend human capability, but it should not replace human agency.

Across both groups, a common theme emerged. The future of AI is ultimately a human question. It is not simply about technological advancement. It is about how individuals, communities, educators, families, researchers, policymakers, and societies choose to engage with these technologies.

As a positive psychologist, I found myself reflecting on a deeper question. Perhaps the most important question is not:

“What will AI become?”

But rather: “How is our engagement with AI shaping us?”

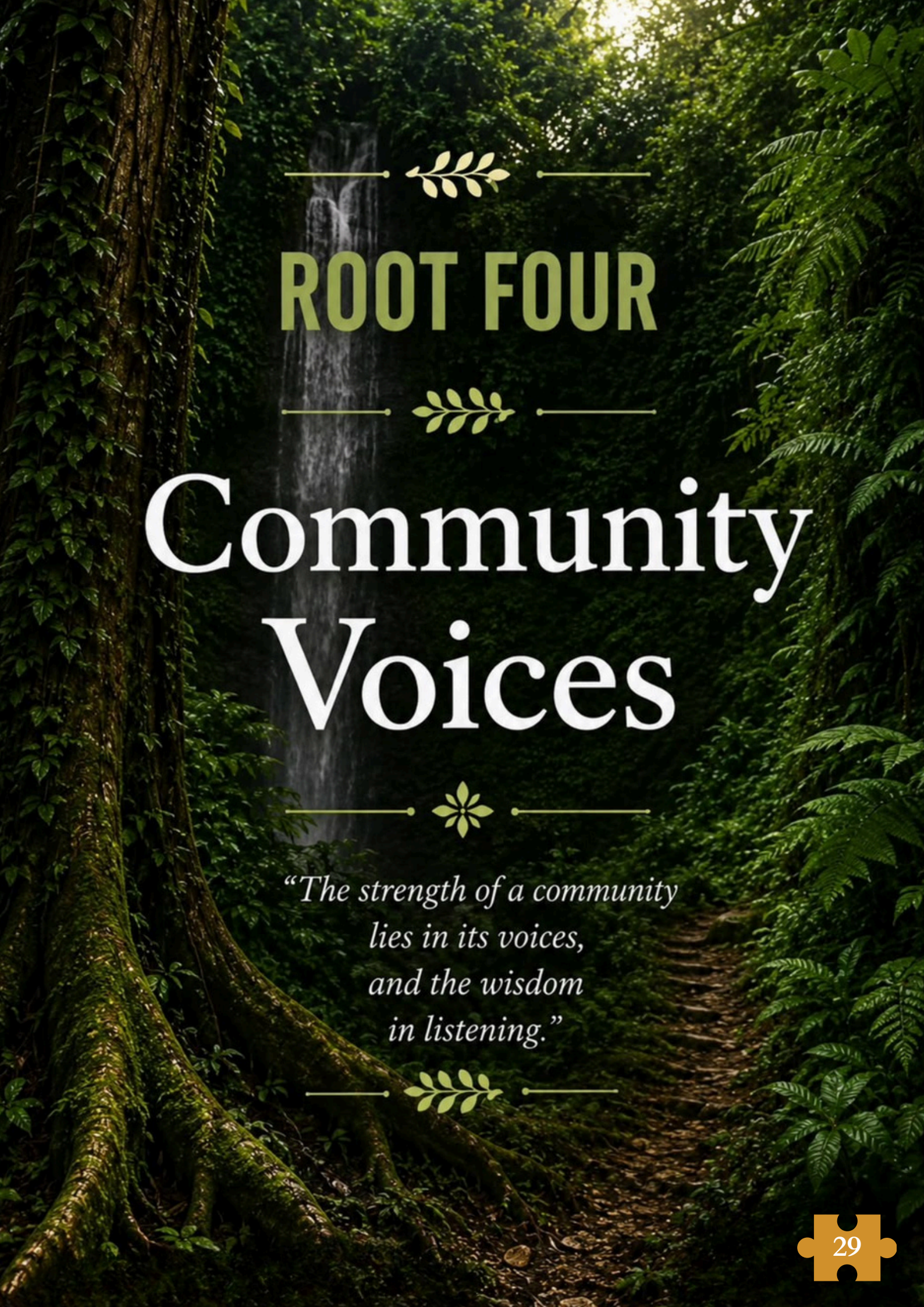
Will it strengthen curiosity or weaken it?

Will it support creativity or replace it?

Will it deepen connection or increase isolation?

Will it help us flourish, or distract us from what truly matters?

The answers to these questions will not be determined by algorithms alone. They will be shaped by our values, our choices, our relationships, our ethics, and our vision for the future. Artificial intelligence may be one of the most transformative technologies of our time. Yet the conversation it inspires may ultimately reveal something even more important: Not what machines are becoming. But what humanity is becoming.

The background of the entire page is a lush, green jungle scene. On the left, a large tree trunk is covered in moss and vines. In the center, a waterfall cascades down a rocky ledge. On the right, a dirt path winds through the dense foliage. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

—  —

ROOT FOUR

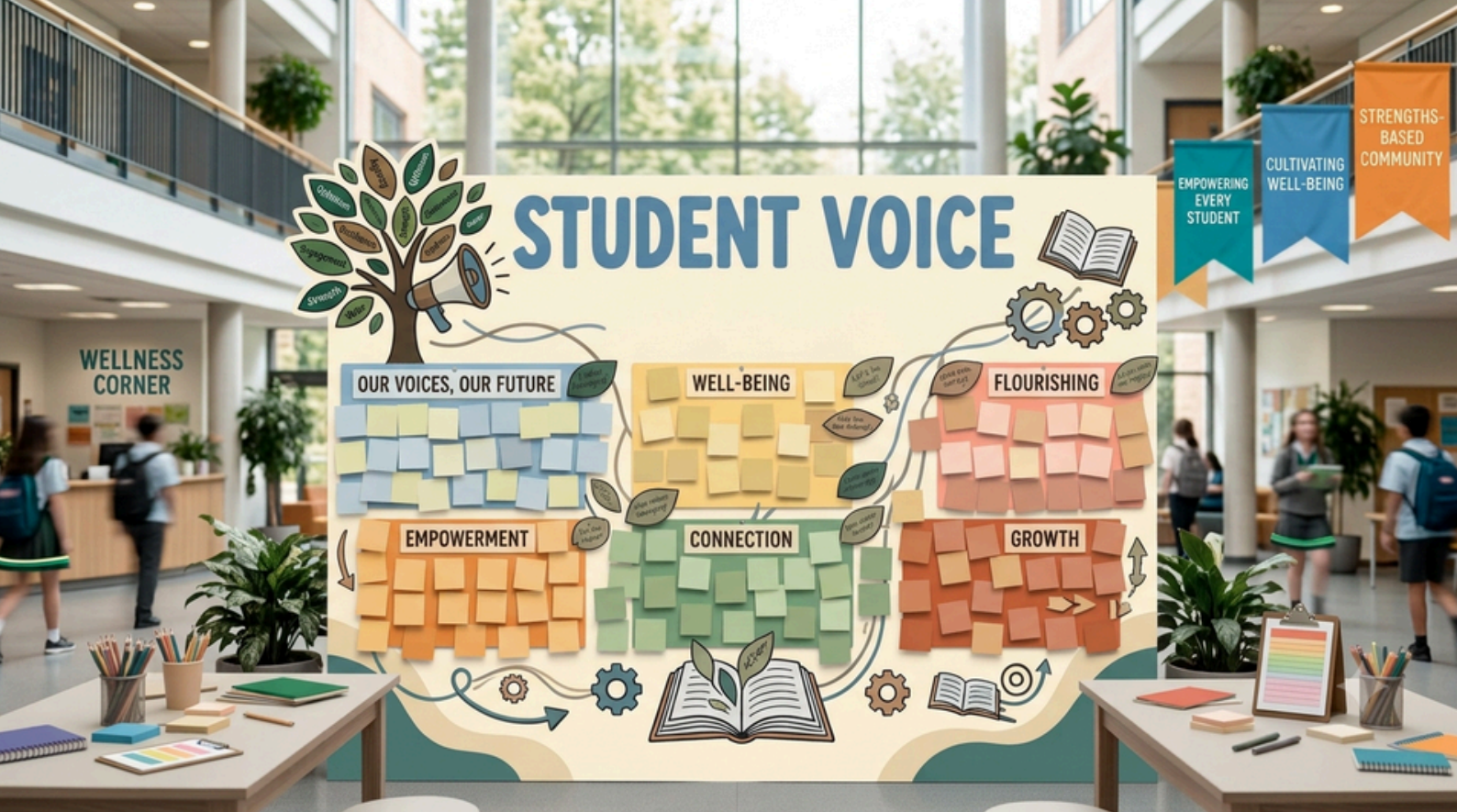
—  —

Community Voices

—  —

*“The strength of a community
lies in its voices,
and the wisdom
in listening.”*

—  —



The Moment Positive Psychology Was Dismissed in the Boardroom

- Wasan Al-Samarrai

I was once introduced to a senior executive in a large healthcare organization in the GCC as a “talented leader” pursuing a master’s degree in positive psychology. Before the introduction could properly unfold, he smiled sarcastically and replied: “Positive psychology? Isn’t that just what we use to stop children from nagging?” The conversation moved on quickly. But internally, I paused.

I was struck not by the comment itself, but by how easily a field centered on human

flourishing, resilience, wellbeing, motivation, and performance could still be dismissed in leadership spaces. And I found myself wondering: Are we not all adults carrying deeply human emotional needs into our workplaces? Do organizations not function better when people feel psychologically safe, engaged, valued, and inspired? Can businesses truly sustain performance without human flourishing?

Perhaps positive psychology is often dismissed because organizations have long been shaped by a mechanical view of performance. Efficiency and targets became easier to measure than meaning, belonging, or emotional wellbeing. In many workplaces, emotional needs are still treated as separate from productivity, as if humanity and performance cannot coexist. This misunderstanding also shapes how positive psychology is perceived. The language of flourishing can sound “soft” in environments that normalize pressure, endurance, and emotional detachment. Yet positive psychology, developed through the work of Martin Seligman and others, is not about forced optimism or ignoring hardship. It is the scientific study of what helps individuals and systems function at their best during challenge, uncertainty, and pressure. In organizational settings, this matters more than many leaders realize. Research from Gallup continues to show that engaged employees contribute to higher productivity, stronger retention, and improved organizational outcomes. . People who experience psychological safety, recognition, and purpose tend to collaborate better, adapt more effectively, and contribute more sustainably over time. This is especially relevant in sectors such as healthcare, where performance depends heavily on human energy, emotional regulation, and trust. Positive psychology is not about being “nice.” It is about understanding what allows people to function optimally. A strengths-based leader does not remove accountability. They recognize that people perform better when their capabilities are acknowledged and developed. Similarly, emotional intelligence is not simply a soft skill. It shapes communication, leadership, decision-making, and team culture. Purpose matters too. People increasingly want to feel that their work means something beyond routine tasks and endless targets. Organizations that cultivate meaning and belonging do not weaken performance culture; they strengthen commitment and long-term engagement. Perhaps the deeper question is not whether positive psychology belongs in

People who experience psychological safety, recognition, and purpose tend to collaborate better, adapt more effectively, and contribute more sustainably over time.

organizations, but why workplaces became so comfortable separating performance from humanity in the first place. Organizations are not machines detached from emotion. They are human systems shaped by trust, relationships, and shared psychological experiences. Culture influences whether people speak up, innovate, collaborate, or quietly disengage. Sustainable performance ultimately requires sustainable humans. Perhaps positive psychology sounds soft only because we have become accustomed to organizational cultures that normalize exhaustion, disengagement, and emotional detachment. But flourishing is not weakness. In a world increasingly focused on artificial intelligence, perhaps organizations must remember the value of human intelligence too — the emotional, relational, and psychological conditions that allow people not only to perform, but to flourish.

The Endowment Library: When Reading Becomes a Flourishing Community

In every community, there are large initiatives led by institutions and smaller initiatives that begin with a single idea. While these efforts may differ in scale, their impact can be profound, enriching lives and strengthening the social and intellectual connections that bring people together.

In this issue, we are pleased to highlight a wonderful initiative that demonstrates how individuals can contribute positively to their communities by sharing knowledge and encouraging a culture of reading. The story of the Endowment Library is not simply about borrowing books; it is about building a community of readers who come together to exchange ideas, experiences, and a shared love of learning.

The initiative began nearly four years ago through the vision of Ms. Najia Al-Rudaini, who owned a diverse collection of valuable books. Wanting to share these resources while maintaining ownership of them, she developed the idea of creating a “library endowment,” allowing people to borrow books and return them after reading.

This simple yet innovative idea helped readers access books without the cost of purchasing them, while also transforming the project into a

What makes the Endowment Library remarkable is not simply the number of books it contains or the number of people it serves, but the idea upon which it was founded: that knowledge grows when it is shared, and that a simple act of generosity can continue benefiting others for years to come.

lasting charitable contribution dedicated to the benefit of others and offered in honor of loved ones. Ms. Al-Rudaini established a modest library consisting of several shelves and carefully organized the collection into categories such as classical literature, crime fiction, self-development, and other subjects. Initially, participation was limited to family members and a small circle of friends who shared a passion for reading.

To encourage engagement and discussion, members began meeting monthly to exchange insights about the books they had read, discuss new ideas, and renew their book loans. Over time, these gatherings evolved into a meaningful space for learning, dialogue, and community building.



The library's primary mission is to encourage reading and lifelong learning, maximize the use of existing books, and continually enrich the collection through carefully selected additions from publishers and annual book fairs.

Today, nearly four years after its founding, the Endowment Library continues to thrive. Although its membership remains relatively small, there is a growing desire to expand and welcome new readers who share a love of books and knowledge.

What makes the Endowment Library remarkable is not simply the number of books it contains or the number of people it serves, but the idea upon which it was founded: that knowledge grows when it is shared, and that a simple act of generosity can continue benefiting others for years to come.

What began as a personal collection of books and a sincere desire to benefit others has become something greater than a library. It has become a space for learning, conversation, and connection, reminding us that the simplest ideas often leave the most lasting impact.

Perhaps this is the true spirit of an endowment: allowing goodness to continue growing and flourishing long after the original gift has been given.



ROOT FIVE



Meaning *and* Reflection

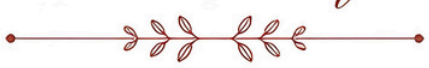


*“Reflection turns experience
into wisdom.”*





Two Parallel Roads

—  —
Personal Reflection
—  —

- Dr. Saddiga AlGhalib



From my hotel room, I look out at two perfectly parallel roads.
Both are alive.
Both carry movement, light, and direction.
Both lead toward the same horizon.
Both carry cars.
One also carries a train.

As if I am being gently reminded:
Some choices move slowly, like a person walking.
Some move faster, like a car. And some move faster, like a train.

What I love most about this view is not the roads themselves.
It is what is not visible.

There is no trace of the paths that brought me here.
No map of my past.
No replay of what has already been lived.

And yet, I am here.
This moment reminds me of something simple and true:
The past is no longer in front of me.
It does not disappear in meaning.
But it is no longer my direction.
What remains are the lessons.
The understanding.
The quiet strength they left behind.

Since an early age, I have been searching for purpose and meaning.
I see patterns.
I notice details most people miss.
I have spent much of my life thinking about uncertainty, meaning, resilience, and change.
And I often ask myself: Why these?
Perhaps because they shape every human life,
even when we are not aware.

As humans, we do not know much.
Some believe they do.
Some know more than others.
But still, we know so little.

And maybe that is part of the beauty of being human—
that some of us spend our lives searching for meaning.
My own journey has not been simple.





Living through pain, anxiety, depression, ADHD, and emotional wounds from an early age has shaped the way my mind sees the world.

It taught me to see deeply, to feel intensely, and to keep searching.

I am grateful for the people who carry light—
for those with positive thoughts and creative minds who have crossed my path.
And I am also grateful for the darkness I have known, because it has taught me empathy.

There are still echoes within me.
Old voices.
Old criticisms.
Sometimes they are quiet.
Sometimes they are loud.
But they are no longer my direction.

As long as we are alive, we are given something powerful:
The ability to choose.
Not just where we go,
but how we move.
I can walk.
I can drive.
I can take the train.
The destination may look the same.
But the experience of the journey is not.

For me, the choice is becoming clear.
I want to walk.
Slowly.
Gently.
Aware of where I am.
I want to enjoy the view,
to explore what is around me,
and to continue discovering what is within me.
I want to take deep breaths, without feeling that I am behind.

This is not a rejection of speed.
It is a return to presence.
The past has done its work.
It has shaped me, taught me, and prepared me.
But it no longer defines the road ahead.
What I see now is not limitation.
It is possibility.



ROOT SIX

Looking Forward



*“The best way to
predict the future is
to create it.”*



UPCOMING EVENTS

As our roots continue to deepen, we look forward to a season of learning, connection, and flourishing. We have an exciting lineup of events ahead and would love for you to join us on this journey.

September 2026

Interactive Webinar Series

Theme: AI and Human Flourishing

Our September series will explore the relationship between artificial intelligence, wellbeing, education, ethics, and human potential. Through interactive discussions and practical applications, participants will have the opportunity to examine how emerging technologies can support human flourishing while preserving the values that matter most.

October 2026

World Mental Health Day Event

We plan to celebrate World Mental Health Day by bringing together professionals, educators, researchers, students, and community members to explore pathways toward positive mental health, wellbeing, and flourishing. The event will highlight collaboration, innovation, and community engagement across the region.

November 2026

Interactive Webinar Series

Theme: Positive Psychology Interventions

This series will focus on evidence-based positive psychology interventions and their application in educational, organizational, healthcare, and community settings. Participants will explore practical strategies for promoting wellbeing, resilience, strengths, meaning, and flourishing.

December 2026

Newsletter 2: Emerging Possibilities

Our second newsletter will focus on innovation, connection, technology, and hope, highlighting new partnerships, research initiatives, and the growing intersection between positive psychology, education, wellbeing, and artificial intelligence.

We invite you to join us as we continue building a community dedicated to learning, collaboration, and human flourishing.

BEHIND THE HIDDEN ROOTS

How this newsletter came to life



Vision and Editorial Leadership

This newsletter was envisioned, directed, and supervised by Dr. Saddiga J. Alghalib, Head of the Positive Psychology Division of the Middle East Psychological Association (MEPA). From shaping the theme and selecting the content to coordinating contributors, developing the editorial direction, and guiding the narrative, every decision reflects a commitment to authenticity, meaning, scientific integrity, and community impact.



Design and Creative Production

The beautiful design, layout, and visual storytelling were brought to life by Adeelah Yahya. Her creativity, attention to detail, and dedication transformed ideas into a visual experience that reflects the spirit of The Hidden Roots, creating space for readers to pause, reflect, and engage with each page. Final editing and proofreading were also completed by Adeelah Yahya, ensuring clarity, flow, and polish in the final publication.



Artificial Intelligence Collaboration

This newsletter was developed with the support of ChatGPT (OpenAI) as a creative and editorial support tool. ChatGPT assisted with brainstorming, structural feedback, language refinement, copy editing, design concepts, visual storytelling ideas, and iterative review throughout the development of this publication. All editorial decisions, content selection, interpretation, authorship, and final approval remained the responsibility of Dr. Saddiga J. Alghalib. We believe that, when used thoughtfully and responsibly, artificial intelligence can enhance human creativity while preserving human judgment, purpose, and accountability.



With Gratitude

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Middle East Psychological Association (MEPA), our contributors, partners, speakers, students, volunteers, and community members whose encouragement, expertise, and generosity helped make this inaugural edition possible. Your voices, ideas, and efforts are the roots that continue to strengthen our growing community. Together, we are planting the seeds of a flourishing future.





**Every flourishing community
begins beneath the surface.**

**Like roots that are often hidden from view,
our shared efforts provide the strength
and nourishment needed for future growth.**

**Let us continue to build a community
that values growth, connection, and
the science of human flourishing.**

A Gentle Invitation

Continue the Journey

To learn more about us and upcoming events, please click on the website below:



<https://www.mepa.me/>

Join our growing Insights into Wellbeing community to receive:

- Future editions of Insights into Wellbeing
- Exclusive companion guides and reflection resources
- Webinar invitations and upcoming events
- Research updates and opportunities for collaboration

Scan the QR code to Follow us on Instagram

To get in touch with us, please email us at



positive@mepa.me



[Join our mailing list by clicking on this link !](#)