

Analyze This!



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Providence College, Department of Psychology

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Analyze This!

Analyze This! is the Providence College Psychology Department's biannual newsletter. It features articles written by psychology majors, as well as faculty announcements and department news. Enjoy as you read the Volume 24: Issue 2, Spring 2023 publication of *Analyze This!*

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Psychology and the Good Life

by **Rachael Layden**



Most college students think they know what it takes to live a happier life. Getting a good job and making money seems to be the answer to many student's views on what constitutes a good life. However, they are dead wrong. Dr. Laurie Santos, Professor of "Psychology and the Good Life" at Yale, has found that many people do the exact opposite of what will truly make their lives better. Her course is the most taken class in the school's 300-year history and focuses on the science behind happiness. Providence College's Women in Technology welcomed Dr. Laurie Santos '21 Hon. back to campus on Tuesday, April 18th to discuss study/work-life balance and the science of well-being. "The Happiness Lab" top-3 Apple podcast, hosted by Dr. Laurie Santos, provides the latest scientific research on happiness that will change her listener's views on happiness. With the increase in mental health crisis in college students, Dr. Santos' course and podcast provide evidence-based solutions to lower stress/anxiety.

Dr. Santos' presentation began with her top five tips to live a more flourishing life. The first tip is that our minds lie to us all the time. Money, power, and success do not constitute a happy life. Happy people don't feel the need to push for more than what they have. Her second tip is that happiness is hurt by hedonic adaptation. Hedonic adaptation is another way of saying we get used to stuff. When someone gets a new job with a higher salary, they get used to the increased amount of income after six months and end up wanting more. There is a discrepancy between what people have, compared to what they think they need; people are always looking for the next best thing. The power of gratitude for what you have in life provides more genuine happiness than any amount of money. Tip number three suggests people invest their time and money into things they won't get used to. We should be spending our time

and money on meaningful experiences because these are not subject to hedonic adaptation. We can't get used to a vacation or experience the way we can with money/power.

The fourth tip from Dr. Santos is that self-care is a common happiness mistake. People are happiest when they are other-oriented instead of self-focused. Doing nice things for others has a bigger and longer lasting effect on happiness than self-care. It has been proven that there is a stress decrease in cortisol when doing something nice for someone else. So, instead of focusing on self-care to improve happiness, we should text a friend or donate to a charity to make these happiness effects more robust and last longer. Lastly, tip 5 from Dr. Santos is to be there for the good parts of your journey, along with the bad. We need to recognize the good things in life by spotting successes and enjoying the moment. However, we have real negative emotions that cannot just be ignored. When we push down these negative emotions there are negative cognitive changes as a result. Instead, we should use the R.A.I.N. method of meditation: Recognize what is happening by labeling your emotions, Allow the feeling to be just as is, Investigate with interest and care of feelings, and Nurture with self-compassion. Dr. Santos strongly suggests that college students struggling with mental health try using the RAIN method along with her 5 tips on happiness to live a good, joyful life.

Personal Growth at PC

by Leigh Paradis



As a second-semester senior only 20 days away from graduation, I frequently find myself reflecting on my growth throughout the past four years. I arrived on campus in the fall of 2019, said some hard goodbyes to friends and family, and was left alone in my new dorm room with new faces surrounding me and a whole lot of new information to learn. Being someone who is very family-oriented, this new chapter of college was daunting, to say the least. My first semester proved challenging with the adjustment to college life, but something that remained steady was my passion for learning. The classroom provided an outlet to learn and forget about outside stressors. As the weeks continued, my confidence only grew, both academically and socially. Then my college took an unexpected turn with the COVID pandemic, and while it is easy to focus on the negatives, through COVID I was able to spend more time with family and, during my sophomore year, grow friendships with my roommates that will last forever. Now, as a senior, I am applying to physician assistant programs, and the person who arrived on campus four years ago feels like an entirely different person. PC has given me incredible friendships, knowledge that I will use in my future career, and immense opportunities, such as creating my own club and getting involved in service and leadership opportunities. Replaced with the shy, timid younger

version of myself, I am now a confident, ambitious, wiser person, ready and excited to take on the next chapter of my life. My younger self would be immensely proud of all my accomplishments while at PC, and it is all thanks to the opportunities that this institution has given me. If I could go back and tell my younger self two pieces of advice, one would be something that my mom always said to me: that life, college, or any new, daunting chapter is a marathon, not a sprint. Meaning that change is scary, but if you take it day by day, and celebrate the small victories, soon you will be on your way to success and happiness. And secondly, also something my mom said to me growing up because moms are always right, is that if you believe it, you can do it. I used this advice in all aspects of my life; whether I was preparing to take the GRE or preparing for a big presentation, I would always say to myself, "I can do this," because when you have confidence in yourself and put your mind to something, you can do it. As my time at PC is quickly expiring, I cannot say enough thank yous to my friends and family and my friartown family for making the last four years exceed my expectations and push me to grow in ways I never thought possible.

Making My Younger Self Proud

by **Vannelie Melendez**



When we are kids, we do not really care about many things and do whatever we want without giving it a second thought. In many cases, being a kid involves a lot of learning about what interests us. Often, there are experiences and aspects in our lives that make us want to pursue a particular path. When I was younger, I wanted to be a trash collector to save the world. Now, I want to educate myself to help and create opportunities for underrepresented minorities; this is my new way of saving the world. My younger self would be proud of me because I figured out what I wanted to do in life without changing my goal.

Moreover, I have gone through times of uncertainty. First, I did not know what sport I wanted to focus on for the rest of my life; I did not know what I wanted to do with that sport; I did not know what I wanted to study in college; I did not know what college I wanted to go to; I did not know if I made the right choice with the college I chose; I did not know if what I initially wanted to study was really what I

wanted; I did not know if I was going to be able to make it this far. Four, maybe five, years of uncertainties have changed my life and have pushed me to where I am today. My younger self would be proud of me for overcoming those obstacles that growing up has on its path.

Finally, after making so many decisions that would change my life, all of them, or at least most, were good choices that led me to growth. Throughout many years I did not know what to do, and many of the things I did, I did them with doubt and fear. My younger self knew that she wanted to have her own business, that she loved learning, that I was going to be big in all aspects of my life, that I would graduate from college; she knew that I would do great things; she knew that I would change the world. Now I am graduating. Now it is time to make that little girl's dream happen, making her proud and keep dreaming like she still does.

It Does Get Better

by Kara Cronin



Picture this. You are scrolling through social media feeds and come across a post attempting to bring awareness to mental health. The backdrop for the post is dark, with the words "Depression: Let's Talk About It". While the intention of the post is to bring awareness and start a conversation about mental health, the colors and language used actually project a negative light onto the topic of the post. It ties in with negative stereotypes and leads to assumptions about mental illnesses. While it may seem that these posts are encouraging the discussion of mental health, and maybe those posting are attempting this, but it does more harm than good. It is not that I am in disagreement with what they are trying to say. Moreso, I am someone who has struggled with seeing these posts on my feed and have found myself unable to take them seriously. The dark and for lack of a better word, depressing vibe given by the first one sheds a negative light on depression, which can make people who have been diagnosed less likely to want to talk about it, as it is depicted as something bad. The solution, I might say, would be to give an informative post that is not black and white like the first one, or covered in unrelated, faux-

positive images. By giving information on the topic or how to get the conversation started would be most beneficial to someone scrolling through social media who has depression.

A new movement I have seen often on social media might be the most beneficial one for mental health depiction I have seen in my lifetime. Influencers have started to occasionally post something without the filters, showing themselves in a vulnerable state, explaining that they too struggle with mental illnesses, and that it is normal. This is so beneficial because if people who are struggling see those that they are looking up to struggling with the same things, it doesn't just

make them feel not alone, but also connects them to their idols. While this is a difficult thing for people to do, I commend those who have been brave enough to do it, as it brings more benefits to mental health than any Instagram post with general information I have ever seen.

As the role of social media in our everyday life grows, it is important to understand the importance of proper representation. Being aware of how things you put online may come across to others is a basic learning skill, but the importance extends when talking about something as serious, but common, as mental health. So many people struggle in silence because they are afraid to talk about it, but as more and more people open up about it, it becomes normalized. Whether you are media influencers, mental health advocates, or simply people who use social media, everyone can play a role in promoting positive, yet accurate depictions of mental health in the media and spread the idea that: *It does get better.*

Thank you, Dr. Hayes!

by **Debra Nichels**



Although I've been fortunate enough to work with fantastic professors across all disciplines here at Providence College, the professor I'd like to thank most is Dr. Michael Hayes. From teaching various courses in research and theory, to serving as a student advisor, and more, Dr. Hayes has been essential to students' academic and professional growth in the field of social work. Not only he is a resource within the department, but he also demonstrates a love for his students that extends beyond the classroom. Whether it's hosting end-of-the-year celebrations or getting to know students on a one-on-one basis, Dr. Hayes is always sure to let students know they are valued and understood. As a graduating senior of the class of 2023, I am grateful to have been a member of some of Dr. Hayes' last classes

before his retirement from Providence College. He will be greatly missed by the faculty and students of PC's Social Work Department, and he is a professor whose contributions to Providence College will never be forgotten!

Alumni Spotlight: Sarah Albright



Brief background:

Sarah Albright was a psychology major at Providence College who graduated in the class of 2014. Being a psychology major at PC really set her foundation for her love for the subject. Sarah wanted to pursue her love for psychology and began to do neuropsychology research at the VA in Providence. This research allowed her to learn that she wanted to explore the clinical side of psychology and now is currently pursuing a PhD degree.

Journey in psychology:

Growing up with a chronic illness, Sarah quickly realized that all of her doctors asked about her physical health but never her mental health. Because of this, she made it her mission to inspire people to ask about mental health. Helping people in her situation was one of the things that really sparked her love for psychology. Although she enjoyed and appreciated the research aspect of psychology, Sarah knew that her passions were in the personal and clinical side of psychology. Living with end stage lung

disease did not slow her down, but only inspired her and helped make her purpose clearer. After her undergrad degree at Providence College, Sarah got a lung transplant and began graduate schooling thereafter.

Long-term goals:

Sarah wants to be a clinical health psychologist on a lung transplant team with a special interest in presurgical psychological evaluations. Some of her other goals include continuing research that aims to make a better health quality of life scale, doing community outreach, and promoting organ donation.

Destressing strategies:

To destress and improve her mental health, Sarah has a side business where she sells her art! In addition, she leans on her friends, many of which are also in psychology PhD programs in her similar situation. It also helps that she currently lives in sunny Los Angeles, three minutes from the beach!

Meaningful and impactful research:

Sarah is currently working on her dissertation on mental health outcomes in transplant patients. She looked to explore who has more anxiety, those waiting for a transplant or those adjusting to a transplant. Her work provides a beacon of light upon an area of research that is both underserved and underdeveloped. One of her greatest drives is exploring the connections between mental and physical health while ensuring that patients are not invalidated for very real mental health concerns.

Advice for incoming freshmen:

Sarah's greatest advice for incoming freshmen is to trust your gut! If you really have an interest in something and a part of you wants to explore that field or topic, trust your gut and look into it. Since we will end up working for our whole lives, you don't want to dread going into work every day.

Dr. Wanda Ingram, Senior Associate Dean of Student Academic Success and 1975 Psychology Major Graduate, Retires

by **Dr. Guilmette**



Dr. Wanda Ingram, Senior Associate Dean of Student Academic Success and a 1975 psychology major graduate of Providence College is retiring at the end of June, and I had the pleasure to chat with her this spring about her long tenure in higher education and her experiences at PC. As one of about 270 women who entered PC in the fall of 1971 in first four-year class of females to attend the college and perhaps even more meaningfully as one of about nine women of color in the class of '75, Dr. Ingram has been a role model and mentor for countless minority students and has been an agent of change at both PC and elsewhere.

Dr. Ingram's story began in Newport where she grew up as a "Navy brat." Her father was a career Navy electrician and her mother, who had grown weary of moving every few years with a young family, decided that Newport would be where Wanda and her brother would be raised. So, Wanda attended public schools in Newport and became very interested in science. She graduated from Rogers High School and decided to major in chemistry in college. She was accepted at Brown University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, but her closest friend was going to attend PC and she convinced Wanda to give the Friars a try, which she did and attended the college on an MLK scholarship.

In her first two years at PC, Wanda took a few psychology courses even though she was a chemistry major and found that she liked the subject matter. In her junior year, she changed majors from chemistry to psychology and worked extensively in the physiology and animal learning laboratories of Drs. Clint Anderson, Jack Colby, and George Raymond. She speaks fondly of them to this day and recalls the excitement of conducting psychological experiments with animals.

Following her graduation from PC, Wanda earned a Master's in Counseling Psychology from the C.W. Post Center at Long Island University. She traveled back to New England to work in the counseling center at UMASS Dartmouth, then called Southeastern Massachusetts University. Her work there shifted from the counseling center to training paraprofessionals, programming, and becoming the Director of New Student Orientation. While at UMASS, she was chosen to attend the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) at Wellesley College, a program designed to prepare women faculty and administrators for leadership roles. She eventually became the Executive Assistant to the President at UMASS Dartmouth.

While still working in the UMASS system, Dr. Ingram was asked to become a member of a PC committee that was commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Providence College. In 1990, after being at UMASS Dartmouth for 13 years, Wanda was lured back to PC as an Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Studies where her role was essentially the Dean of Freshmen. In 2003 she earned a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Johnson and Wales University.

During her 33 years at PC, Dr. Ingram has held a number of important administrative positions including Associate Dean, Senior Associate Dean, and now Senior Associate Dean of Student Academic Success.

She has made it her mission to find ways of making the college more of a welcoming environment for all students and their parents. In addition, she has taught in the graduate school and in the School of Continuing Education. However, she seems most proud of and satisfied with her direct contact with first year students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, to whom she has become a mentor, advisor, and supporter.

Dr. Ingram came to PC as a student at a time when some members of the college community were not always welcoming to women or people of color. She has endured outward acts of racism and sexism over the years as a student and even as an administrator, but as she says proudly, "I survived."

In looking back over her career, Dr. Ingram has clearly seen progress at PC with regard to the increasing diversity of the student body and in greater acceptance of that diversity in the college community but she also acknowledges that still more progress is necessary. I can easily imagine how her experiences have provided her with the wisdom and perspective to be of great comfort to the students she advises. With a wonderful sense of humor, Wanda can be both nurturing and assertive when she feels an injustice has transpired.

The Lucille and Leo Caiafa, Jr. Center for Psychological Sciences at Providence College extends congratulations to Dr. Ingram on her long career and commitment to the betterment of PC. She has earned the right, no doubt, to spend more time with her family, a significant source of joy in her life, and in pursuing her artwork that includes creating jewelry and soda can art among other types. We are grateful and proud that in the early 1970s, Wanda Johnson decided to give PC and the psychology department a try.

Update From the President

Sam Lewis writes: I am a senior psychology and health policy & management double major with a minor in business & innovation, and cannot believe this is my last year at PC. This year for Psi Chi, we were not happy about the ways in which its presence on campus was so limited. In response, the Exec Board and I created four new committees that work to uphold the mission of Psi Chi while getting more students involved in psychology on campus. The first committee is the Research Committee (headed by Rachael Layden), which is dedicated to doing research and eventually publishing a paper regarding social psychological concepts on college campuses. In addition, we started an Outreach Committee (headed by Sophie Fulghum) that plans to offer psychology tutoring and educational opportunities to underserved high schools in the surrounding neighborhood. This is instrumental in the inspiration of these children in hopes that they become future psychologists or scientists. We developed a Publication Committee (headed by Sydney Diorio and Mykala Green) that works to construct, edit, and publish Analyze This! and runs the new Psi Chi Instagram @psichiprocollege. Finally, we created an Event Planning Committee (headed by me) that puts on events such as Inside Scoop, PCPC, and the Psi Chi induction! I am grateful

to my Psi Chi Exec Board, Rachael, Mykala, Sydney, and Sophie, our faculty advisors, Drs. Lawrie and Morris, and Mrs. Mullen.

Letter From the Editors

We hope you enjoyed reading the creative articles and psychology department updates in this semester's issue of *Analyze This!*. We would like to thank all of the student writers who took the time to create such compelling, one-of-a-kind articles and our faculty advisors, Drs. Lawrie and Morris, for their advice and assistance. We hope finals went well for everyone and that you all continue your love for psychology outside of the classroom this summer!

Have a great summer!

From your editors: Sydney Diorio, Mykala Green, Sophie Fulghum, & Sam Lewis

Helpful Mental Health Resources



On-Campus Resources:

Personal Counseling Center

Lower Bedford Hall

401-865-2343

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm

After-Hours Mental Health Support (through Personal Counseling Center)

401-865-2343

Dial "2" for a Crisis Counselor

Public Safety/On-Campus Emergency

401-865-2222

Off-Campus Resources:

Off-Campus Emergency

911 or local emergency contact

National Suicide Hotline

1-800-273-8255

Free and available 24/7

Day One Helpline (Sexual Assault and Trauma Resource)

1-800-494-8100

Free and available 24/7

Crisis Textline

Text "Hello" to 741-741

Free and available 24/7

Trevor Project Helplines (for LGBTQ+ mental health concerns)

TrevorLifeline: Call 1-866-488-7386

TrevorText: Text START to 678-678

Please contact Sophie Fulghum, the Psi Chi "Help Helped Me" Officer for Mental Health Outreach, at sfulghum@friars.providence.edu with any questions or to learn more about any of the above resources, as well as to learn about potential alternative resources.