

Praise for *POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE*

“*Positive Intelligence* has had a lasting and transformative impact on me and others in my organization. It is a powerful framework for bringing out the best in everyone and quieting the worst. When you increase someone’s PQ, they will not only perform much better but also feel a whole lot more personal fulfillment, and less stress, along the way.

Positive Intelligence ranks in the top three most influential business books I have ever read. If I could give only one book to the thousands of team members in my organization to enhance their performance, it would be this book.”

—Lisa Stevens, Region President, Wells Fargo Bank

“*Positive Intelligence* can change your life and transform your business. A real game-changer.”

—James D. White, Chairman, President, and CEO, Jamba Juice

“I’ve worked closely with Shirzad and experienced him walking the PQ walk. What gives this book its power is his authentic sharing of how PQ principles transformed him as a leader and a human being.

Experienced leaders know that most change initiatives fizzle because of our mental Saboteurs. Shirzad gives us the tools to conquer these Saboteurs and create positive change that lasts. This is a must-read for any individual or team serious about unleashing peak performance.”

—Dean Morton, former COO, Hewlett-Packard (HP)

“Developing a personal leadership model is one of the most practical, energy-saving, and stress-reducing things that anyone can do for themselves. *Positive Intelligence* makes that job easier by focusing on mastering the two most critical voices in everyone’s heads: Saboteur and Sage. The best news is that leaders at every level can use its approach to get, and stay, on a more ‘winning’ trajectory. This is such a usable, lively, and compelling book.”

—Douglas R. Conant, former CEO, Campbell Soup Company, and *New York Times* bestselling author

“This is a very innovative and important application of original psychological thinking to the business field. The PQ model provides a solid basis for bringing meaning and significant change to one’s life. The strategies for identifying and dealing with Saboteur and Sage while harnessing untapped powers of the mind have proved highly effective in the business setting, and might well be applied elsewhere. If you want to create major positive change in yourself, your team, or loved ones, read this book.”

—Crittenden E. Brookes, MD, PhD, Stanford University, and Distinguished Life Fellow, American Psychiatric Association

“I have worked with Shirzad personally and seen him work with many other Presidents and CEOs. His impact is often game-changing for a team and life-changing for the individuals. When a coach raises a team’s PQ, it can quickly shift every player from good to extraordinary. The player’s skills are the same, but he has learned to command those voices in his head to his advantage. That makes all the difference in performance. *Positive Intelligence* is a must-have for anyone who leads or coaches a team.”

—Jed York, President and CEO, San Francisco 49ers

“Shirzad delivers a simple, doable, groundbreaking set of exercises that can help you develop your ‘performance’ muscles, increase your PQ score, and gain access to previously untapped mental resources. Working out was never so rewarding or so much fun! So if you’re ready to get even better, get this book—today.”

—Marshall Goldsmith, *New York Times* bestselling author, *Mojo* and *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*

“*Positive Intelligence* is an insightful book that identifies those internal voices (Saboteurs) that undermine self-confidence and prevent us from achieving our potential. In a clear and practical way, Chamine describes the actions that quiet those voices to allow us to listen to our internal Sage. This is an excellent book for anybody who seeks to increase their personal satisfaction, interpersonal effectiveness, and performance.”

—David L. Bradford, PhD, Senior Lecturer Emeritus, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University. Co-author of the bestselling books *Power up* and *Influence Without Authority*

“Working with Shirzad has had a profound impact on me. The tools and techniques to raise PQ are simple, concrete and pragmatic, yet incredibly effective. They help me remain focused on what truly matters and grounded amidst the swirl of daily life.

The PQ model is a brilliant breakthrough as it defines, measures, and improves your awareness of your own performance and happiness. It also helps solve the mystery of why so many smart people still fail to be successful. This book is a gift. Make sure you share it.”

—Jim Lanzone, President, CBS Interactive (CBS Corporation)

POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE[®]

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POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE[®]

**Why Only 20% of
Teams and Individuals
Achieve Their True Potential
AND HOW YOU CAN ACHIEVE YOURS**

SHIRZAD CHAMINE



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While the examples and case studies in this book are drawn from real client engagements, the names and identifying details of persons mentioned have been changed or omitted to protect their privacy.

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First Edition



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To my daughter Teesa
To my son Kian

You have taught me more
than I could ever teach you.

On your worthy quest
for the great river's elusive source,
may you find a lake so pure,
with waters so still,
that you can see, truly see,
this magnificent being, you.

On your winding way,
when life throws you down,
may you, with great delight,
search inside the painted dust
for clues, unfolding
the grand mystery of you.

And when you get lost,
in the stormy moonless night,
may you trust, deeply trust,
as sage, ageless guide,
the true
beautiful
you.

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INTRODUCTION

I was twelve when I read an illustrated book about Sisyphus, the king who was being punished after falling from grace. For weeks I couldn't get the image out of my mind. This poor former king painstakingly pushing a huge boulder up a steep hill over and over again, only to see his efforts unravel right before making it to the top. What torture, I thought! I felt burdened and depressed just thinking about it.

It took me years of observing myself and others to realize that in many aspects of our lives we don't fare much better than Sisyphus. Many of our efforts at improving our success or happiness unravel just as surely as the giant boulder rolling back to the bottom of the hill.

Think about it. Why are most New Year's resolutions abandoned year after year? Why do most dieters succumb to yo-yo dieting? Why does that nagging and anxious voice in our head keep returning to torture us when we are trying to sleep? Why is our increased happiness so fleeting after we achieve what we thought would bring lasting happiness? Why do new leadership skills acquired in workshops soon give way to old habits? Why do expensive team-building retreats only result in temporary blips in team cohesion and performance?

We are indeed being tortured and punished, just as Sisyphus was. But here's the catch! The torture is self-inflicted. The reason so many of our attempts at improving our success or happiness fizzle is that we sabotage ourselves. More precisely, our own minds sabotage us.

Your mind is your best friend. But it is also your worst enemy. Undetected "Saboteurs" in your mind cause most of your setbacks without

your full awareness. The consequences are huge. Only 20 percent of individuals and teams achieve their true potential. The rest of us waste a lot of our time and vital energy playing Sisyphus.

With Positive Intelligence you can both measure and significantly improve the percentage of time that your mind is serving you rather than sabotaging you. This will permanently shift the balance of power inside your mind so you can achieve more of your vastly untapped potential—and help others do the same.

Positive Intelligence is ultimately about action and results. Its tools and techniques are a synthesis of the best practices in neuroscience, organizational science, positive psychology, and Co-Active® coaching. I have honed these tools over many years, first through my own experience as CEO of two companies, and then through coaching hundreds of other CEOs, their senior executive teams, and, sometimes, their families. These tools had to pack a strong punch in a short time in order to fit busy and demanding lives—with some taking as little as 10 seconds to produce results.

I encourage you to have high expectations for what you can get out of this book. All of the stories in this book, while simplified for greater brevity and clarity, are based on actual experiences of my clients. If the experiences of those who have gone before you are any indication, the material in this book can change your life and be a game-changer for your team or organization. Please don't settle for anything less.

PART I

WHAT IS POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

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CHAPTER 1

POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ

Frank, the CEO of a publicly traded company, entered the greatest despair of his illustrious professional career when his company's stock lost two-thirds of its value during the recession of 2008. He was so devastated by his own failure that he broke down crying when his ten-year-old daughter asked why he looked so sad. He could not stop blaming himself for the company's downward spiral, and he often woke up in the middle of the night with his mind racing for a way to get the company back on track.

Frank's senior management team was also experiencing high stress levels, feeling guilt, and pointing fingers over what had gone wrong. They worried about the impact on themselves, on the thousands of others working for them, and on their families. They had been working impossibly long hours to turn things around, without much success. That's when Frank reached out to me for help.

When I met Frank, I suggested that his best bet for a sustainable turnaround of his company was to raise the Positive Intelligence levels of himself and his team. Using the principles of Positive Intelligence, we devised a core question to reframe the team's perspective and redirect its effort: "What do we need to do so that within three years we can say this current crisis was the best thing that could have happened to our company?"

Frank's senior leadership team was skeptical when he posed the question during one of their weekly team meetings. But their skepticism subsided and their enthusiasm grew gradually as Frank opened each subsequent weekly team meeting with that same question. By contemplating the question and utilizing many tools of Positive Intelligence, they were able to shift their entire mind-set from anxiety, disappointment, guilt, and blame to curiosity, creativity, excitement, and resolute action. I predicted that within a year they would discover how they could turn their collective failure into a great opportunity. It took them less than six months.

Over the next year and a half, the company consolidated and streamlined its product offerings. It doubled down on its bet on the original value proposition of the company, which had been lost over years of chasing tempting but unrelated growth opportunities. During this time, the company's stock slowly recovered its value. Each month Frank and his team became more convinced that their "new" company would be far more dominant and successful than it had been in its prime.

When I checked in with Frank recently, he reported that he valued his increased sense of peace and happiness even more highly than his impressive professional and financial gains. This is a typical reaction, as increased Positive Intelligence impacts both. What Frank found most fascinating was that he began having more success once he finally stopped believing that his happiness depended on his success.

Chapter 10 is entirely dedicated to the details of how Frank and his team turned their company around.

WHAT ARE POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ?

As I've already suggested, your mind is your best friend, but it is also your worst enemy. Positive Intelligence measures the relative strength of these two modes of your mind. High Positive Intelligence means your mind acts as your friend far more than as your enemy. Low Positive Intelligence is the reverse. Positive Intelligence is therefore an indication of the control you have over your own mind and how well your mind acts

in your best interest. It should be relatively easy to see how your level of Positive Intelligence determines how much of your true potential you actually achieve.

To illustrate, when your mind tells you that you should do your very best to prepare for tomorrow's important meeting, it is acting as your friend. When it wakes you up at 3:00 a.m. anxious about the meeting and racing in a loop for the hundredth time about the many consequences of failing, it is acting as your enemy; it is simply generating anxiety and suffering without any redeeming value. No friend would do that.

PQ stands for Positive Intelligence Quotient. Your PQ is your Positive Intelligence score, expressed as a percentage, ranging from 0 to 100. In effect, your PQ is the percentage of time your mind is acting as your friend rather than as your enemy; or, in other words, it is the percentage of time your mind is serving you versus sabotaging you. For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is serving you about 75 percent of the time and is sabotaging you about 25 percent of the time. We don't count the periods of time when your mind is in neutral territory.

In chapter 8, I will show you how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams. I will also share compelling research indicating that the PQ score of 75 is a critical tipping point. Above it, you are generally being uplifted by the internal dynamics of the mind, and below it you are constantly being dragged down by those dynamics. Eighty percent of individuals and teams score below this critical PQ tipping point. And that is why 80 percent of individuals and teams fall far short of achieving their true potential for success and happiness.

You can measure your own PQ, or your team's, by visiting www.PositiveIntelligence.com.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Current breakthrough research in neuroscience, organizational science, and positive psychology validates the principles of Positive Intelligence and the relationship between PQ and both performance and happiness.

As mentioned, PQ measures the percentage of time that your brain is working positively (serving you) versus negatively (sabotaging you). Though different researchers have used different methods to track positivity and calculate positive-to-negative ratios, the results have been remarkably consistent. For consistency and simplicity, I have translated various researchers' findings into their PQ-equivalent interpretations:

- An analysis of more than two hundred different scientific studies, which collectively tested more than 275,000 people, concluded that higher PQ leads to higher salary and greater success in the arenas of work, marriage, health, sociability, friendship, and creativity.¹
- Salespeople with higher PQ sell 37 percent more than their lower-PQ counterparts.²
- Negotiators with higher PQ are more likely to gain concessions, close deals, and forge important future business relationships as part of the contracts they negotiate.³
- Higher-PQ workers take fewer sick days and are less likely to become burned out or quit.⁴
- Doctors who have shifted to a higher PQ make accurate diagnoses 19 percent faster.⁵
- Students who have shifted to a higher PQ perform significantly better on math tests.⁶
- Higher-PQ CEOs are more likely to lead happy teams who report their work climate to be conducive to high performance.⁷
- Project teams with higher-PQ managers perform 31 percent better on average when other factors are held equal.⁸
- Managers with higher PQ are more accurate and careful in making decisions, and they reduce the effort needed to get their work done.⁹
- A comparison of sixty teams showed that a team's PQ was the greatest predictor of its achievement.¹⁰
- In the U.S. Navy, the squadrons led by higher-PQ commanders received far more annual prizes for efficiency and preparedness.

Squadrons led by low-PQ commanders ranked lowest in performance.¹¹

Groundbreaking research in psychology and neuroscience upends the common assumption that we need to work hard so we can succeed so we can then be happy. In reality, increasing your PQ results in greater happiness and performance, leading to greater success. Success without happiness is possible with low PQ. But the only path to greater success with lasting happiness is through high PQ.

Besides impacting both performance and happiness, higher PQ can also literally impact your health and longevity:

- Research has shown that higher PQ results in enhanced immune system functioning, lower levels of stress-related hormones, lower blood pressure, less pain, fewer colds, better sleep, and a smaller likelihood of having hypertension, diabetes, or strokes.¹²
- Catholic nuns whose personal journals in their early twenties showed higher PQ lived nearly ten years longer than the other nuns in their group. Higher PQ can literally help you live longer.¹³

We could spend an entire book splicing and dicing research data on this topic. As a matter of fact, many excellent books already do. Several books by pioneering scientists Barbara Fredrickson, Martin Seligman, Shawn Achor, and Tal Ben-Shahar provide insightful analysis of the rigorous academic research in this field in recent years.¹⁴ In this book, I'll focus on giving you specific tools to actually sharpen your Positive Intelligence and raise your PQ score in the midst of your busy work and life.

HOW POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PQ WERE BORN

They say “necessity is the mother of all invention,” and that was definitely true in the birth of the Positive Intelligence framework. I originally developed this framework in an attempt to achieve both greater success and greater peace and happiness in my own life. All of the tools and techniques of Positive Intelligence were things that I tried out on

myself first, long before realizing that countless others could benefit from them as well.

I had a tough childhood. I grew up in poverty—a sensitive kid in an abusive environment. Shortly after I was born, my father’s fledgling grocery store went belly up and my father went into hiding to avoid his loan-shark creditors, who were hounding us every day. My family was so superstitious that they decided I had brought bad luck to my father’s business. Since it was too late to get rid of me, they decided to at least change my name. My family never again called me by my real name: Shirzad. That event proved to be an apt omen for most of my childhood experiences. Not having many of my physical or emotional needs met, I developed a protective cocoon of depression. Bitter resentment and anger, at myself and at the world, followed me well into my adult years.

I had high ambitions, and as I got older I realized that I needed to figure out a way to stop feeling miserable, angry, and anxious all the time so that I could focus on making something of myself. Initially, my search took me to a study of the inner workings of the mind. A *summa cum laude* degree in psychology and a year of PhD studies in neuroscience proved equally disappointing in providing answers. I stopped asking deeper questions at that point. I decided instead to find happiness in professional achievements, like so many others seemed to be doing.

I spent the next four years getting a master’s degree in electrical engineering at an Ivy League school and working as a systems engineer at a preeminent telecommunications research laboratory. I studied and worked hard and earned top honors, which I thought would bring happiness. It didn’t, so I decided an MBA would accelerate my progress.

The life-changing turning point that led to my eventual development of the Positive Intelligence framework came when I was sitting in a circle with eleven fellow students in a Stanford MBA class called *Interpersonal Dynamics*.¹⁵ Our guideline for this group interaction was to be fully authentic and reveal everything we were really feeling and thinking in the moment. At some point, one of my classmates turned to me with some trepidation and said that he had often felt judged by me and was bothered by that. I listened and thanked him politely for his helpful

feedback, but in the back of my mind I was thinking, *Well, of course you feel judged by me, you idiot! You are the biggest loser in this group. How else could I be thinking of you?*

The group was about to move its attention away from me when another person turned to me and said something very similar. Again, I nodded and thanked her politely, while thinking that she was of course the second-biggest loser in the group. Then came a third and a fourth person, repeating the same thing. By now, I was beginning to feel uncomfortable and a little angry. But I was still discounting the feedback. After all, it was coming from a bunch of losers, I thought.

Then the person sitting immediately to my left, whom I admired greatly, got up in disgust and moved to the opposite side of the circle. It turns out that he had seen through my insincerity in acknowledging the feedback. He said he was so frustrated by my unwillingness to truly accept the feedback about my judgments that he couldn't even bear to sit next to me anymore. He said that he too had felt judged by me, albeit positively. He was upset because he felt I placed him on a pedestal and could never see him for who he really was.

That passionate and honest expression of feelings finally broke through the protective shell of my inner "Judge." In an instant I recognized that all my life I had seen everything through the lens of this Judge, categorized everything as good or bad, and placed everything in one box or the other. I instantly realized that this was a protective mechanism I began using during my childhood to make life seem more predictable and controllable. That day, sitting in a circle with eleven classmates, I discovered the hugely destructive power of this Judge "Saboteur" that had been hiding in my head—and that I had never even known existed.

That discovery changed everything. It revived my search for the mechanisms of the mind that lead to happiness or unhappiness, success or failure. What I eventually focused on were two related dynamics:

1. Our minds are our own worst enemies; the mind harbors characters that actively sabotage our happiness and success. These Saboteurs can easily be identified and weakened.
2. The "muscles" of the brain that give us access to our greatest

wisdom and insights have remained weak from years of not being exercised. These brain muscles can easily be built up to give us much greater access to our deeper wisdom and untapped mental powers.

Exercises that focus on one or both of these dynamics can dramatically improve one's PQ in a relatively short period of time. The result is dramatic improvement in performance and happiness, in both work and personal life.

PQ IN ACTION

I have been the chairman and CEO of the Coaches Training Institute (CTI). We are the largest coach-training organization in the world. We have trained thousands of coaches around the globe, leaders and managers in most of the Fortune 500 companies, and faculty at both Stanford and Yale business schools. I have personally coached hundreds of CEOs, often their executive teams, and sometimes their partners or families.

Many of the CEOs and senior executives whom I have coached over the years have been type-A personalities uninterested and/or uncomfortable with deep psychological exploration. Taking this into consideration, the Positive Intelligence tools and techniques were designed to generate results without needing to first develop in-depth psychological awareness. These techniques take a direct approach that literally builds new neural pathways in your brain, pathways that increase your Positive Intelligence. Greater insight automatically accompanies the building of these pathways, which equate to building new brain “muscles.”

This book is organized into six parts. Part I, which you are halfway through, provides a general overview of the PQ framework that continues in the next chapter. There are three different strategies for increasing PQ, discussed in turn in parts II, III, and IV. In part V, you will learn how PQ is measured for both individuals and teams so that you can keep track of your progress. Part VI discusses applications of PQ to many work and life challenges, including three in-depth case studies. At

the end of each chapter, an Inquiry will prompt you to connect the dots between what you are reading and your own work and life.

Your potential is determined by many factors, including your cognitive intelligence (IQ), your emotional intelligence (EQ), and your skills, knowledge, experience, and social network. But it is your Positive Intelligence (PQ) that determines what percentage of your vast potential you actually achieve.

By raising my PQ, I have been able to convert the considerable difficulties and challenges of my own life into gifts and opportunities for greater success, happiness, and peace of mind. I wrote this book with the belief that you can absolutely learn to do the same.

Inquiry

If you could significantly improve one important thing, personally or professionally, as a result of reading this book, what would it be? Keep that goal in mind as you read this book.