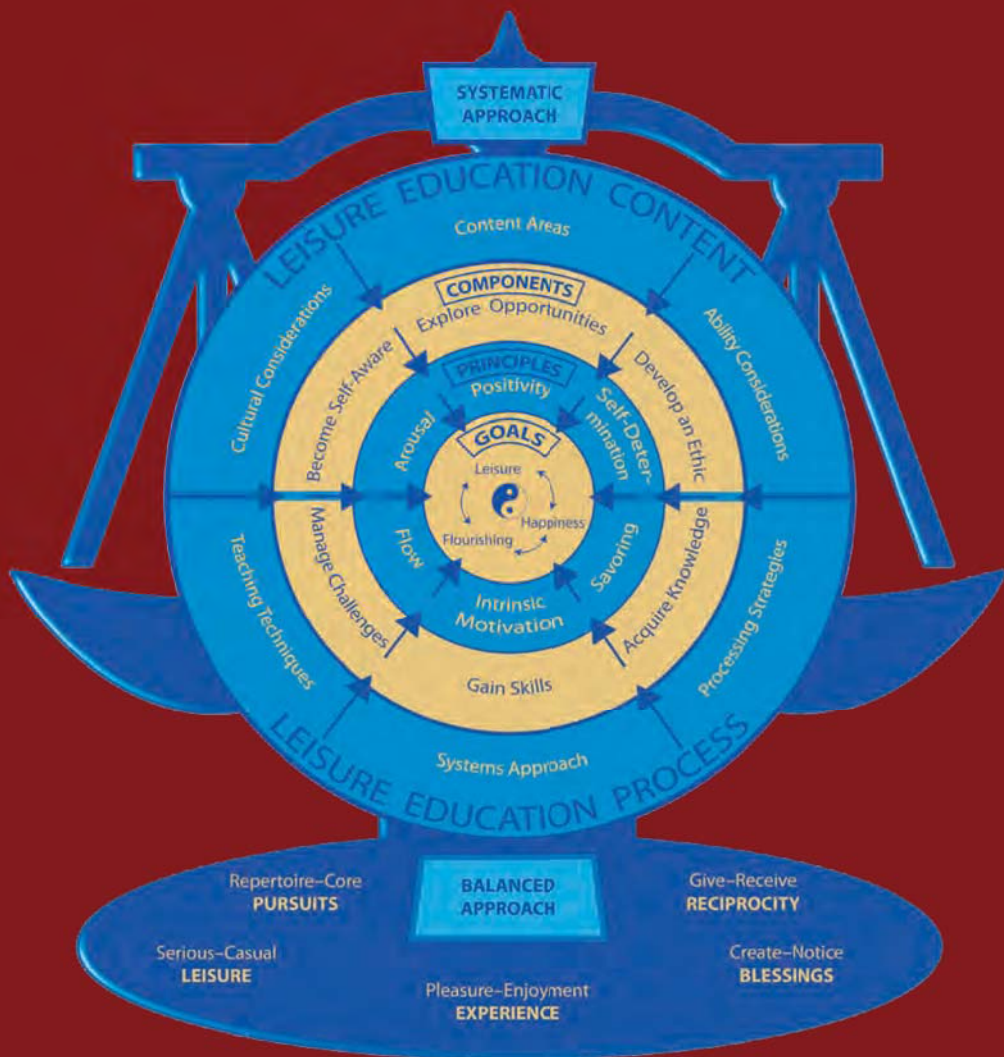


Leisure Education Program Planning

Fourth Edition



John Dattilo

LEISURE EDUCATION PROGRAM PLANNING

FOURTH EDITION

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FOURTH EDITION

JOHN DATTILO, PH.D.

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY



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FOR AMY, DAVID AND STEVEN

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PREFACE

The most significant change in this edition of *Leisure Education Program Planning* is the infusion of information gleaned from writings by some of the leaders of the positive psychology movement. These readings provide valuable perspectives and insights about concepts related to leisure and leisure education. Books published within the last decade that had a substantial impact on my thinking and this book include the following: *Savoring* by Fred Bryant and Joseph Veroff, *Positivity* by Barbara Fredrickson, *Flourishing* by Maureen Gaffney, *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt, *Counter Clockwise* by Ellen Langer, *The How of Happiness* by Susan Lyubomirsky, *Creating Your Best Life* by Caroline Adams Miller and Michael Frisch, *Flourish* by Marty Seligman, and *Blessing* by David Spangler. These titles may be of interest to readers who wish to further explore the concepts presented in this book. The text *Leisure Education Specific Programs*, also by Venture Publishing, continues to be available as an accompaniment to this book.

The book is organized into five sections. The first section contains six chapters designed to increase understanding of principles related to leisure and leisure education. Recommendations and research on leisure education is provided in the second section to review previous efforts to implement and understand leisure education programs. Considerations for developing the content (what to teach) of leisure education are provided in the third section. The fourth section addresses the process (how to teach) of implementing leisure education programs. The final section of the book contains specific leisure education programs associated with six possible leisure education components (develop a leisure ethic, be aware of self in leisure, explore leisure opportunities and resources, make leisure choices, make leisure decisions, and engage in social interactions). We have field-tested and evaluated various components of these leisure education programs.

I hope you find *Leisure Education Program Planning* to be informative. For those readers familiar with earlier editions, I hope you find the additions and revisions to the book to be helpful. -JD

1



AN INTRODUCTION: A JOURNEY

*And where do we go from here?
Which is the way that's clear?
—David Essex
Rock On*

INTRODUCTION

An idea presented in this book is that there is value in contemplation and becoming self-aware. It is helpful to take time to think about our life and the world around us so that we might make sense of our journey. As we become mindful and more aware of how we arrived at our current state, what brings us happiness, and how we might experience leisure we are better able to live our lives to the fullest and to flourish.

One way to assist us in making sense of our intellectual travels is to record them. Sometimes we share details of our journey orally, on various occasions we journal either privately or more publicly via social media, and in other instances we may express them in poetry. Regardless of the method, analyzing our path and then sharing our observations helps to bring clarity to our lives and improve our chances of experiencing leisure.

Taking time to be thoughtful and consider the road we are on has positive results. As an example, I am sharing a part of my journey here. Specifically, I am writing about what has led me to be concerned about people encountering challenges with their leisure. Also, I focus here on one possible solution, leisure education, to address those challenges. Through these efforts I have concentrated on various principles that may guide practice and, therefore, I have written this book. Perhaps when reading this book you may be motivated to describe your journey that might help you in developing leisure education services.

TO BEGIN

At any time, I probably am reading several different books. I often have a book in my backpack or briefcase, perhaps in the car, and at home. I try to have a book at the ready so when I am waiting for such things as a meeting or an appointment, I am in the active process of discovering.

As I completed the first section of this book, I was reading a couple books that both began with introductions about the respective authors. One book contained a description of the author's credentials identifying various professional accomplishments. It is the kind of introduction that someone might read when I have been invited to speak at a conference. This type of acknowledgment has consistently resulted in me feeling uncomfortable and awkward. So, when I

am given the option of introducing myself or having another person introduce me, I choose the former.

Also, when I have an opportunity to introduce a respected friend or colleague, I now seize the moment. Rather than providing a litany of accomplishments describing what the person has completed, I try to tell a story about who this person is relative to the situation. When I am allowed to introduce myself, I provide a similar description trying to share a bit about who I am related to the topic at hand as opposed to describing my professional accomplishments.

This brings me to the other book that I was reading as I was writing the preliminary chapters in this book. In *The Art of Flourishing*, Jeffrey Rubin (2011) wrote an introduction describing how he came to write the book. The introduction contains a presentation of the author that flows smoothly into the content of the book and helped me to see the connections between the author and the information. Since I found this to be interesting and revealing, I now humbly present my story relative to leisure education and this book. I have organized the description of my journey into the following sections:

- Moving beyond helplessness
- Discovering self-determination
- Finding balance
- Generating a personal mission statement

MOVING BEYOND HELPLESSNESS

While in college, I earned two bachelor degrees at Penn State—one from the College of Education and one from the College of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. I liked how my unique education gave me a background in both leisure and education. After graduation, I taught for several years in Chesapeake, Virginia. During my time as a teacher, I came to believe that the students with whom I worked were much more capable and intelligent than they acted. I was not satisfied with implementing the educational strategies I learned as an undergraduate. As a result, I enrolled at the University of Arizona, where I obtained my master's and went on to the University of Illinois for my doctorate.

During my doctoral studies, I read the book *Helplessness* by Martin Seligman (1975), who is now considered one of the founders of the positive psychology movement. The book, along with other related readings, provided me with insights into why the individuals with whom I worked were not reaching their potential. As described in more detail in Chapter 4, the theory of learned helplessness reminded me that living creatures could learn a great deal including those things that help us to flourish, such as the ability to read, or those that contribute to us languishing, such as believing that we are helpless. This theory was consistent with my observations and the stories individuals were telling me.

As an aside, years ago I was invited to Spain to talk about the inclusion of all people in leisure services at a conference conceived and organized by Domingo Garcia-Villamisar. Throughout the conference, Domingo, the presenters, and various dignitaries discussed issues impacting policies and practices related to education and leisure. It became clear to Domingo and me that even though he is a Spaniard and I an American, we spoke the same language. Among many other connections, Seligman's theory of helplessness was the primary theoretical construct on which both of us based our dissertation and we received our Ph.D. degrees within months of each other. The collegiality and friendship we forged has resulted in a meaningful ongoing collaboration.

DISCOVERING SELF-DETERMINATION

From Seligman's work on helplessness, I discovered that as people learn to be helpless their motivation to do a variety of things decreases tremendously. Although this theory helped me to understand why people around me were not achieving their potential, it was Edward Deci's (1975) book, *Intrinsic Motivation*, and subsequently the book he coauthored with Richard Ryan (1985), *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, that improved my understanding of how we might work together with people to facilitate their growth, development, happiness, leisure, and, ultimately, flourish. Again, these writings supported my observations of and conversations with individuals struggling to pursue leisure.

My first faculty position was at the University of Nebraska, where I met William Murphy, with whom I coauthored the first edition of this book. I learned much about educational principles and ethics from Murph. Although he towers above me wearing his cowboy boots and blue jeans, he is a gentle giant and an amazing colleague and friend. Since I was a junior faculty member trying to balance teaching, service, and research, in my first year Murph unselfishly assigned himself to teach one of my courses each semester. When I am called upon to make decisions about supporting others who may be experiencing challenges, I use Murph's humble and positive ways to help guide me.

Throughout my first years at Nebraska and, then as a faculty member at Penn State, I continued to be guided by the self-determination theory; however, it was not until I joined the University of Georgia faculty that I began to more systematically integrate into my work this theory and the theory of flow, developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Although I learned a great deal from reading *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* (1975), it was reading *Finding Flow* (1997) and then critically dialoging about it with Douglas Kleiber that helped me to understand important connections of these theories to leisure education.

Not coincidentally, Doug Kleiber taught the course in which I read *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety*. An important reason for me leaving Penn State and going to the University of Georgia was the chance to work with Doug. Of all my colleagues, Doug is by far the one who has contributed most to my scholarly thinking. Given our friendship that began at Illinois, our mutual respect, and <http://www.sagamorepub.com/products/leisure-education-program-planning-4th-ed?src=lipdf>

confidence in ourselves as a basis of our personal and professional relationship, we critically yet comfortably examined our own thinking and the scholarly work of Csikszentmihalyi and others.

The synergy between Doug and me, and the important work of our doctoral students resulted in development, implementation, and evaluation of a variety of leisure education programs. It was such a tremendous experience at the University of Georgia to have so many terrific graduate students with whom to work; they are not only amazing thinkers but they are wonderful human beings. The collaboration with Doug, the incredible cadre of, then, doctoral students, and the experience of implementing multiple leisure education programs, accelerated my understanding of leisure education that is hopefully reflected in this book.

As another aside, one of my favorite teaching experiences was when Judy Voelkl, a faculty member from Clemson, and I developed a graduate course together on the connection between positive psychology and leisure that we taught to Clemson and the University of Georgia students with the help of Doug Kleiber and Fran McGuire. At the time we taught the course in the late 1990s, positive psychology was just getting traction and it was an exciting course. The course readings and subsequent class discussions helped to plant the seeds for many ideas contained in this book.

FINDING BALANCE

The leisure education service model presented in this book is identified as both systematic and balanced. I describe the programming approach as systematic since a systems approach is used to organize programs by including a clearly stated purpose, goals, and objectives, as well as detailed content and process. This is only one of many ways to develop a leisure education program.

Also, the consideration of keeping a balanced approach to life is applied to the model and explained in detail in Chapter 6. Although several examples are provided in Chapter 6 of maintaining a balanced approach, I highlight here a balance I try to maintain that substantially influences the way I view the world. This balance is associated with the following two concepts:

- Make sense out of negative experiences
- Embrace positivity

Make Sense Out of Negative Experiences

As much as we would like to avoid pain and suffering and protect our loved ones from such experiences, life happens, and with it comes negative experiences. What I have found valuable though, especially as an educator, is to try and make sense of these negative occurrences and learn from them. To make this point, I identify five situations that were negative experiences for me yet all resulted in a positive refocusing of my life. These lessons I learned, perhaps the hard way, are ones that leisure educators might find useful.

Dad's dependability

I am fortunate to have been raised by two loving parents who devoted their lives to each other and their children. They raised my siblings and me in a household filled with love, opportunities, and support. My father was a rock, someone you could count on to be there and do the right thing when times were tough. Through his example I learned so much. I remember as a young child watching in amazement when he returned money to a clerk who had given him change for ten dollars instead of the five he actually used. I felt his resolve when I cracked my head on an end table and with blood spurting he calmly applied direct pressure and bandaged me. I experienced his compassion when I was in high school and as I was trying to find a graduation party, I not only got lost but I got the car stuck in the mud; Dad not only came to my rescue using a large metal chain and boards to pull me out but then told me to go have fun at the party.

So, even as an adult when I learned my father was diagnosed with a rapidly growing, destructive brain tumor on a Thanksgiving over 20 years ago, and then when we lost him that following March, I felt as if this protective cocoon in which I had been raised was stripped away. I believed that I could rely on him for anything and now he was gone, my safety net had disappeared. I did not realize until his death just how much I leaned on him. With that understanding, I resolved to be dependable so that I would keep his spirit alive. I try to be true to my word, as my father was, and not commit to something unless I am confident I can do what I agree to do and do it on time. I share with my boys, David and Steven, that one of the most important things we have control over is being honest and being true to our word.

Steven's fortitude

Our first son, David, was born healthy and he thrived. However, when our second son, Steven, at 6 months of age was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, an aggressive form of cancer, my world tumbled down. Over the next 6 months I watched this little one deal with pain from the cancer and the chemotherapy that resulted in him becoming malnourished, needing blood transfusions and surgeries, and having such a depressed immune system that the smallest fever resulted in an ambulance ride. Happily, when we celebrated his first birthday, though it was too early to confirm, the recently successful surgery resulted in him being cancer free! He is now a thriving student at Regis University in Denver, I am in wonder at the man he is becoming and feel fortunate that the nightmare ended and a dream came true.

During Steven's illness, whenever possible, we treated him at home with the support of daily home nurse visits and our willingness to perform medical procedures associated with chemotherapy and other care. Even so, there were several months when I slept more in the hospital than at home. I remember during this time when I would awaken from a brief sleep or nap and feel fine and then, in an instant, reality streamed into my consciousness and the darkness of the living nightmare descended upon me once again. I recall this experience often and it helps me to count my blessings and put my life and what is happening around me into perspective. Since that time, I do not take for granted my good health and the vigor of those around me; I think of the fortitude expressed by <http://www.sagamorepub.com/products/leisure-education-program-planning-4th-ed?src=lipdf>

such an innocent child. For years I have worn a Livestrong bracelet to remind me of the challenges experienced by my son and my father, and I recently joined the 4-gallon mark for blood donations as a small way of expressing my appreciation to those who supported us in our time of need.

Mom's appreciation

Several years ago, my mother was diagnosed with polymyalgia rheumatic, a chronic debilitating condition characterized by a continuous decline in voluntary muscle movements accompanied by severe fatigue. As a result of her steady reduction in movement and extensive exhaustion, she moved from her townhouse, to an apartment on campus at a nursing care facility, to finally more skilled nursing. To the credit of my sister, Michele, and my two brothers, Larry and Jerry, once my mother moved out of her townhouse, each day one of her children shared a good portion of the day and at least a couple meals with her. Fortunately, I am less than 3 hours away by car, so I drove to be with her at least a few days each month.

Given her weakness, she took many brief and long naps. As I helped her with meals, she often dozed and I waited patiently until she awoke to continue assisting her. During these times, I practiced being mindful as I attended to her breathing, noticed the tender way she folded her hands, or simply appreciated the blue sky I could see from her window. Nevertheless, what made the biggest impression on me was how, through her physical challenges, she continually expressed gratitude as best she could to everyone she encountered and maintained her gentle ways. Throughout my mother's life, until her illness, I admired her commitment to helping others; later, I grew to respect her ability to graciously receive help from others. When some people compliment my siblings or me about our dedication to our mother, we all respond truthfully that it was an honor to be of some assistance to the woman who gave us so much. Whenever possible, I think about my kindhearted mother and try to express my gratitude to others.

Move to the back

I grew up in Thornburg, Pennsylvania, population: not many. I attended an elementary school with four classrooms where each grade cohort shared the classroom with one, sometimes two, other grades. The teacher taught one class and gave us learning activities to complete or pages to read while she taught the other class. Since we completed independent readings and assignments in school, we never had much homework. The only time I struggled was when we needed to memorize facts. Then, in seventh grade, I was bussed to this new, large junior high. It was there that my small town mentality, lack of experience with homework, and my difficulty with memorization collided with my history teacher. I soon learned that he liked to arrange each row of students in order of how well we performed on the most recent exam. This required a bit of shifting of seats after each exam—well, some shifting—I managed to consistently take up residence in the last seat in the back of my row throughout the year.

I had plenty of time to reflect on this experience over the summer as I cut lawns and delivered newspapers. When I returned for eighth grade, I was embarrassed when I was assigned to the cohort from which not much was

expected. It was then that I resolved to make things different. Each night, I read the assigned readings and took notes. I then rewrote my notes from that day's lectures. I woke up early for school every morning and reviewed each notebook, working to commit the information to memory. Given my success that year, the study habits I practiced stayed with me throughout my educational career and the work ethic I developed has remained with me to this day. I learned the first half of an important lesson—if I work diligently, I am rewarded with success. However, it was not until over 30 years later that I learned the second half of this valuable lesson.

This too shall pass

Over a decade ago, we moved from being University of Georgia Bulldogs to Penn State Nittany Lions since I was hired to be the new department head. Although returning to my alma mater was a dream come true, I soon felt both personally and professionally that something was not quite right. As many people shared with me after the fact, there were forces solidly entrenched in the university that were working against me. Although for years I worked to achieve fairness and transparency, the negative forces continued unbeknownst to me. Finally, without warning, I was relieved of my administrative post. During this same time, the mother of my boys chose to leave our home, file for divorce, and attempted to gain sole custody of our sons so that she could return to Georgia with them; fortunately, the judge did not grant her request.

In both situations, no matter how hard I worked, regardless of how committed I was to doing the right thing, I was unable to change others' decisions which influenced me and people dear to me. Taking initiative and avoiding procrastination benefitted me in my professional life and I thought these approaches would help me overcome any obstacle. Living the life of a family man and consistently putting the needs of my loved ones before mine, I thought would result in a happy family. Yes, we influence our destiny, but what I did not realize is that there are many factors, including the way people think about me, that are not within my control. I am humbled by these experiences and I am now more aware of the fragility of life's situation. At times, when things are going really well or, conversely, when I am wondering if things could get any worse, I think of the engraving on King Solomon's ring "This too shall pass" and it helps me to gain perspective on what I am experiencing and my life. This lesson has helped me to embrace the moment and focus on positivity—which is the topic I describe next and the subject of Chapter 3.

Embrace Positivity

It has taken me considerable time to learn some life lessons. The etching of a tortoise on a seashell that hangs around my neck reminds me that patience is a virtue and for me to try to be at peace with learning some lessons slowly. One lesson that I have begun to learn, and that is reflected often in this book, is the importance of positivity. I find value in identifying the optimistic slant on circumstances I experience. As often as possible, when I encounter people who are complaining I try to identify the upside to the issue that seems to be causing

them distress. I work to generate as much positive energy as I can. Although it is a trite analogy, I confess that I think about the glass being half full.

The other aspect of positivity that I strive to achieve is putting myself in upbeat situations. To achieve this goal, I try to release feelings of obligation that result in negativity. I also focus on surrounding myself with people who are positive. I do this because when I am around positive people I become more positive and then I am more likely to act with compassion and respect. So, I tend to avoid spending much time with people who chronically complain or gossip and rather I seek out those who, for the most part, identify the good things in the world and their lives.

A few years after my divorce, I was at a conference visiting with friends. As we walked to a social, one friend mentioned that she wanted to introduce me to a colleague. I welcomed the introduction and found my first meeting with Amy to be refreshing. I noticed she was quick to laugh and smile and put a positive spin on each topic we discussed. Although we did not see each other after our first meeting, we began communicating via email, then by telephone, and later I visited her. We have now been married for several years. She is such a constructive force in my life and her cheerful demeanor continuously reminds me of the power of us being together and of how her positivity gratefully impacts me.

The wonderful thing about positivity is that it is within our control. When we encounter negative experiences we can make sense of those encounters by using positivity. We can be the active force in our lives and other people's lives to help all of us move together toward happiness, leisure, and flourishing. I believe that leisure education can be an effective vehicle to deliver this message.

GENERATING A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

When creating an agency, organization, company, or any group, it is helpful to develop a mission statement. A *mission statement* is a formal document that specifies the overall purpose of an entity intended to guide decisions and communicate the rationale for existence. Mission statements can evolve and, over time, change depending on the focus of the entity and variations in circumstances. In addition to being useful for complex units, a mission statement can be useful for individuals.

Individual mission statements can help clarify to each of us what it is we want to do with our lives and what we want to have guiding our decisions. In addition to providing clarification to the person composing the mission statement, such a statement can be used by the composer to communicate to others the thinking, beliefs, and attitudes that direct the person's choices and behaviors. Given the ability of a mission statement to concisely articulate a person's intentions, I present here my current mission statement.

To take responsibility for demonstrating respect for other living things by being persistent in my actions and beliefs and pursuing positivity in others and me.

So, a mission statement helps to direct us and communicate the path we wish to take. Another benefit of a mission statement is that the more frequently we review it, the more likely we are to think about it, and the better our chance is to live it. Although most of us want to do the right thing and live the best life possible, often we get engrossed in day-to-day demands or respond to social pressures and we may lose sight of our purpose, of the path we wish to follow. A mission statement helps us to remain self-aware and to keep what we value in the forefront of our minds with the hope that we will more consistently behave in a manner in keeping with our values and good intentions.

CONCLUSION

Since there is value in contemplation and becoming self-aware and mindful, we may wish to reflect on our lives and the world around us so that we make sense of our life path. In this introduction, I share a part of my journey that led me to include material in this book. I describe my intellectual and emotional travels to illustrate the benefits that come from self-analysis. I hope that by doing so you may be motivated to describe your journey so that you might better be able to collaboratively develop thoughtful leisure education services.

In my journey, I have moved beyond relying on the theory of helplessness to discovering the importance of self-determination. I heeded the advice of the ancient sages from across the globe to find a balance in my life and to help support me in the provision of leisure education. I attempt to achieve equilibrium between making sense of negative experiences and embracing positivity. I do this so that I listen and attend to people I encounter and together experience as much happiness as possible, create contexts conducive to leisure, and flourish.

A strategy that might be fitting when exploring and making sense of our lives as well as when we are educating people about leisure is to develop a personal mission statement. My statement involves an acknowledgment of my responsibility to demonstrating respect for other living things. To be conscientious, I commit to being unrelenting in my actions and beliefs so that I pursue positivity in others and in me. To end this chapter and to help set the stage for this book, I use the phrase from the Rusted Root song:

Send me on my way, on my way...

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