

Strength-Based Teaching: Bringing Out the Best in Students and Teachers

Every teacher wants to bring out the best in their students, yet our broader education systems are often deficit-oriented and focus more on poor performance, problem behaviour, and correcting weakness than on building strength. What's more, in the day-to-day rush of schools and with pressures to get through curriculum, strengths can get left behind which is demoralizing for teachers and students alike.

This keynote explores three decades of research showing the advantages of taking a strength-based approach for students, including greater levels of happiness at school, higher student engagement, smoother transitions from kindergarten to elementary school, more successful adjustment from elementary to middle school, and higher levels of academic achievement.

Lea will also share the latest research showing the benefits of strength-based teaching for the teachers themselves. Teachers will learn how to identify and utilize their own strengths and help their students play to their strengths.

Having helped schools to implement positive education in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Hong Kong, China, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates, Lea weaves together her science with concrete school examples and best practices to help teachers make wellbeing more visible in their classrooms.

CORE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Key research findings linking strengths to wellbeing and academic achievement.
- Best practices for introducing strengths into the classroom.
- Practical methods for how to embed strengths into the staffroom.

FORMAT: 60-minute keynote.

IDEAL AUDIENCES: Teachers, Principals, School Administrators, Teaching Assistants, School Counselors, Psychologists, Schools Nurses, Mental Health Staff.

“Professor Lea Waters is a highly knowledgeable and very engaging presenter. I cannot speak highly enough of her depth of knowledge in the field of Positive Psychology and Positive Education. Her personal and professional commitment to student and wider community wellbeing is exemplary. A truly outstanding academic and presenter.”

— **Marita Hayes-Brown, CEO at PESA - Positive Education Schools Association, Ltd.**

“To say that Lea Waters presentations sparked a strengths movement in our school would be an understatement! Having Lea Waters here at our school was absolutely the boost we needed to move our school further ahead in the field of positive education.”

— **Kirsten Johnston, Associate Director of Guidance, Lakefield College School**

ABOUT LEA:

[Lea Waters](#), PhD is a professor, published author, psychologist, internationally-celebrated speaker and one of the world's leading experts on Positive Education, Positive Organizations and Strength-Based Parenting and Teaching.

Professor Waters is the Founding Director and Inaugural Gerry Higgins Chair in Positive Psychology at the Centre for Positive Psychology, [University of Melbourne](#) where she has held an academic position for more than 23 years. Lea holds affiliate positions at Cambridge University and the University of Michigan and serves on the [Scientific Board at Berkeley University's](#) Greater Good Science Center. Lea is the 2017-2019 President of the International Positive Psychology Association, serves on the Council of Happiness and Education for the [World Happiness Council](#), is the Patron of Flourishing Education Japan and Ambassador for the Positive Education Schools Association.

As a researcher, she has published over 100 scientific articles and book chapters.

Her book, [The Strength Switch: How The New Science of Strength-Based Parenting Can Help Your Child and Your Teen to Flourish](#), was the top release on Amazon in the parenting category, was listed as one of the [top reads for 2017](#) by Berkeley University's Greater Good Center and was listed in the Top Five Books on Happiness for Children in the UK's Top Five site. It has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Hungarian, Arabic, Russian, French, and Spanish.

In 2015, Professor Waters was listed as one of Australia's [Top 100 Women of Influence](#) by the Financial Review and Westpac Bank. She has been listed in the Marques 'Who's Who in the World' since 2009 and was included in the 2017 edition of Who's Who of Australian Women.

Lea is committed to spreading the science of positive psychology as widely as possible and has been featured on *Morning Dose* (The CW, Dallas, TX, USA), *Revolution School* (ABC, Australia), *Matter of Fact* (ABC, Australia), *Destination Happiness* (Channel Nine, Australia), *Today Extra* (Channel Nine, Australia), *National Nightly News* (Channel Ten, Australia), *The Project* (TV3, New Zealand), *The Café* (NZTV, New Zealand), *Breakfast* (NZTV, New Zealand). Lea is also frequently featured in print media, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Globe* (Toronto), *The Guardian* (UK), and *The Age* (Australia). Lea's TEDx talk, [Warning: Being positive is not for the faint hearted!](#) explores how small positive steps can make a big impact on the wellbeing of ourselves and others, has been viewed more than 118,000 times.

Lea is the founder of [Visible Wellbeing](#), an initiative that brings the science of wellbeing and learning to schools. Visible Wellbeing is being used in schools across Australia, Asia, Canada, New Zealand and United Arab Emirates. Her newest program, [The Strengths Switch](#), offers parents and educators free resources, online courses, and facilitated courses to better build the strengths of families across the globe.

