CHAPTER 6

CATEGORIES OF POSITIVE AFFECT

As explained in Chapter Four during the presentation of the elaborated theoretical model of enrichment, the resources accrued in work and family roles could either produce non-facilitative affect, facilitative affect, or, in some cases, no identifiable positive affect. To re-iterate, non-facilitative affect implies that while a resource experienced by a participant in Role A may produce a particular positive affect, the affect itself is not implicated in the improved performance in Role B; rather, the transfer of the resource itself is responsible for their improved performance (recall the Instrumental Pathway). Facilitative affect implies that the resource experienced by a participant in Role A produces positive affect that is implicated in their improved performance in Role B (recall the Affective and Mixed Pathways). The simplest way to describe the difference between facilitative and non-facilitative positive affect is to equate non-facilitative affect with “feeling” and facilitative affect with “doing”. In this sense, facilitative affect is a catalyst; when facilitative affect is generated due to a resource accrued in Role A, it propels the individual to do something in Role B that results in improved performance in Role B. In contrast, non-facilitative affect is merely a feeling, mood state or sentiment generated due to a resource in Role A that does not affect performance in Role B. This chapter will present the various categories of non-facilitative and facilitative affect respectively, with corresponding participant quotes to illustrate the constructs.

NON-FACILITATIVE AFFECT

Within the context of the critical incidents of enrichment provided by participants, many positive moods and emotions were reported; however, it should be noted that the categories of positive affect described in this section are merely by-products of resources accrued in work and family roles. As the participant excerpts will illustrate, these types of affect are ends in themselves, with no bearing on improved performance in another domain. They are thus not implicated in the enrichment process. It is for this reason that the quotes are succinct; they are included for illustrative purposes, as well as to be later distinguished from the categories of facilitative affect. In the following section, where facilitative affect is described, greater contextual information emerges with each example to discern the impact of affect upon performance, and how the categories of facilitative affect are qualitatively distinct from those of non-facilitative affect.

Confidence/Self-worth/Empowerment

This category encompasses a large proportion of participants’ reported affect deriving from resources accrued in work and family roles. The following four excerpts illustrate the category:
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Excerpt 1:
R: Did learning those communication skills, in the context of work, improve how you were feeling within your role as a manager?
P: Absolutely! I think I was more confident knowing that I had those things to rely on as opposed to just being frustrated in a situation and not knowing how to get out of it.

Excerpt 2:
R: So, would you say that recognizing that you need to have these “fierce conversations” at work actually improved how you were feeling in your work role in terms of your mood or ...
P: Definitely.
R: How so?
P: I mean, it’s confidence…There’s a confidence piece to it, right?

Excerpt 3:
R: That patience and understanding that you’ve developed at home…has it made you feel differently in your role as a parent or a spouse?
P: Yeah…I definitely feel, now, a lot more fulfilled personally, because I think sometimes when you’re patient and you think things through, then you can get yourself out of a lot more situations. Like now, I don’t think there are many situations with my son that I couldn’t get out of… I know this sounds weird, but there’s not many situations I couldn’t get out of. In the past, the contingency was, ‘just pass baby back to mom’. Whereas now, I can quite clearly understand and tackle the situation myself.
R: Would you say you feel more confident in your parenting role?
P: Yeah, I think that’s what it breeds…and I think you get a sense of worth out of it.

Excerpt 4:
R: Would you say that in the context of your work, doing the cost/benefit analysis, applying these practical skills, does that make you feel better within your role as a manager – does it affect how you feel?
P: Yes.
R: In what way?
P: At least I feel like I’m making quality, well-researched decisions.
R: Okay…How does that affect your mood?