

Powering Up Your Positive Thinking



Most of us have felt it at one time or another – the feeling that we’re on top of the world and nothing can knock us down. We feel energized. Nothing can go wrong in our perfect world and the future can’t be anything other than bright. Some of us experience this more than others. Those who do feel it more often tend to be more optimistic in nature, and typically view the world around them in a positive light.

What makes a positive thinker?

Positive thinkers are people who look at a glass as half-full instead of half-empty. They look on the bright side of life. They see the good in the bad. They are confident in their abilities and the abilities of others. They always seem to have a smile on their face and walk with an extra beat in their step.

However, positive thinking is *not* about hiding negative feelings and putting on a happy face to cover what is really being felt. We all have negative experiences, and sometimes we simply can’t escape them no matter how hard we try. The positive thinker will realistically deal with the unpleasant situation as needed, and then attempt to move on successfully.

Why should I think positively?

There are many ways that thinking positively can help you.

- It could help you live longer. People who think positively tend to have better immune system function. They are also able to better cope with illness or disease, both physically and mentally.¹
- It can help manage daily challenges by providing a sense of stress relief.
- It can make you feel better. Instead of feeling defeated when you face a difficult situation, taking control by thinking positively can help you take charge of how you feel. Much of the negativity that you may usually carry around with you may be erased.
- It’s contagious! Having a positive outlook will not only make you feel better, but may also make those around you feel better.
- Others will respond to you differently. When you’re in a good mood, those around you notice it. Give it a try sometime. Notice how you’re treated differently if you have a positive attitude versus a negative one.
- You may find more opportunities to be successful because you aren’t stuck in a negative mind-set. You may even notice possibilities that you hadn’t thought of before.

Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.
- Abraham Lincoln

Powering Up Your Positive Thinking



How to think positively

- **Replace negative thoughts** with positive ones. For example, “It’s hopeless” may be replaced with “I have the power to control how I handle this situation, and I choose to ...”.
- **Look for the good.** Many times situations that seem negative turn out to be blessings in disguise.
- **Surround yourself** with positive people.
- **Use positive words.** Use phrases such as “I will” and “I can”, and you just may find yourself believing them.
- **Believe.** Believe in yourself and in the power you have to manage, and overcome, your situation.
- **Visualize.** Picture yourself successfully dealing with the situation in a positive way.
- **Smile until you mean it.** When you’re feeling negative, smiling can do wonders for your mood. If you stick with it and keep smiling no matter how bad you may be feeling, eventually your smile will take over.
- **Be realistic.** Try to see the situation from a realistic viewpoint. Ask yourself how long the situation is truly going to last. Look for examples of times you have been in a similar situation and have gotten through it.
- **Force yourself to remain optimistic** will cause others to react to you in a more positive way, and in turn, have a positive effect on you. Just as others react differently to you when you have a positive outlook, they will react differently to you when you have a negative attitude. This may only add to your negativity.
- **Be physically active** – Keeping fit and using relaxation techniques can keep you calm and help keep the positive thoughts flowing.

Thinking positively may take some work, but it doesn’t have to be difficult. Just give it a try – take one day and commit to thinking nothing but positive thoughts. Try to find the silver lining in each and every cloud. You just may find yourself walking on the sunny side of the street!

References

1. Anderson, Norman B. (n.d.). *Emotional Longevity: A new approach may identify what really determines how long we live*. Retrieved December 2, 2005 from <http://www.gwsae.org/executiveupdate/2005/June/hp.htm>

This material is provided by CIGNA for informational/educational purposes only. It is not intended as medical/clinical advice. Only a healthcare provider can make a diagnosis or recommend a treatment plan. For more information about your behavioral health benefits, you can call the member services or behavioral health telephone number listed on your healthcare identification card.

“CIGNA” and the “Tree of Life” logo are registered service marks of CIGNA Intellectual Property, Inc., licensed for use by CIGNA Corporation and its operating subsidiaries. All products and services are provided exclusively by such operating subsidiaries and not by CIGNA Corporation. Such operating subsidiaries include International Rehabilitation Associates, Inc. (Intracorp), CIGNA Behavioral Health, Inc., vielife Limited, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company and HMO subsidiaries of CIGNA Health Corporation.

©2009 CIGNA