

Positivity

By Suze Hargraves

I don't think it's any great secret. I'm not the world's most positive person. I'm not a glass half empty or half full person. I'm the person looking for the crack in the glass. I do try though. Really I do. Lately there's been a lot of talk out there about "positivity" and how to work it into life to better both mental and physical health. This sounds like a good idea to me so let's explore this concept and see how we can put it to practical application.

The Mayo Clinic reports that positive thinking effects life span, risk of death from cardiovascular disease, resistance to the common cold and helps us develop the coping skills required to lower stress and get through the ups and downs of life. Although no one seems to know the exact science behind this, Mayo Clinic reports that there are some theories: "One theory is that having a positive outlook enables you to cope better with stressful situations, which reduces the harmful health effects of stress on your body. It's also thought that positive and optimistic people live healthier lifestyles — they get more physical activity, follow a healthier diet, and have reduced rates of smoking and alcohol consumption." That seems to make sense to me. In truth though, no matter what the science might be, the everyday reality is that "positivity" is good for you.

How exactly does a person go about retraining themselves to think positively? It's not as difficult as you might think. I've found a great list of easy things anyone can do to turn on the positive at <http://www.wikihow.com/Think-Positively>.

Make a decision to do your own thinking and have control over your attitude. That means deciding to conquer the negativity that is going on around you. Think of what you can do today and how you will react that will make a difference to your life instead of allowing people and situations to dictate.

Associate or mix around with people who can provide something of value. Avoid those who sap your energy and motivation. If you can't avoid them, or don't want to, learn how to let them get you down. Just remember you do not think that way even when others do.

Start saying positive things especially about yourself. How you communicate to yourself affects your thinking and your emotions, as well as your self-esteem.

Be open to trying new things. Experiencing a wide variety of life in a positive light will do wonders. Something as simple as trying the mussels in a restaurant can lead to new tastes and different sensations.

Read more. Read about how those people who fought fear with courage and succeeded in life. Through reading, you will gain new knowledge and understanding and it will help you clear whatever is blocking your thinking and create more ideas you can use in your daily life.

Set goals no matter how impossible it may seem at the moment. Keep yourself busy working on them. Once you reach one, you will get inspired. With each goal achieved no matter how small, you will gain confidence and your self-esteem will increase.

Change your mental pictures. What and how you see yourself and your surroundings make a difference to your thinking. You are visualizing or imagining something at every waking hour. Start to change your old internal dis-empowering pictures with images of something that you wish to experience and that is positive for you.

Start questioning yourself on your behavior and attitude. Ask yourself why you are resisting or producing the habits or attitudes that you dislike. Stop each time you catch yourself in a circumstance that brings about negativity and doubts.

Apparently this whole "positivity" thing is contagious. Try it out and see if you feel better. If you're like me and a tangible reminder is your thing, the White Mountain Community Health Center's Teen Clinic is selling \$5 "positivity" bracelets at Cool Jewels in North Conway as a fundraiser for the health center. (Positive and making a difference! I love it when teens take the lead.) Friend the health center on Facebook and post your positive thoughts. Any way you decide to join this whole positivity movement remember this: Maybe we can't all be 100% positive 100% of the time, but for every moment we're doing, thinking, feeling or saying something positive we're giving ourselves a powerful tool toward leading better, healthier and happier lives.

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