

The Power of Positive Thinking

September 1, 2020

Choosing to look at your life and circumstances and to frame them with a positive slant is called "positive thinking". The question, "Is the glass half-empty or half-full?", is a good summation of this philosophy. Basically it means that you have the ability to choose the lens through which you view the world. If you have a tendency to look for the worst in things and in people (half-empty glass) whether consciously or unconsciously you will make certain that events continue to feed that belief system. The good news is that we do not have to continue to choose suffering and misery. We can retrain our thought processes to be more positive and to enjoy life more thoroughly. This does not mean that one denies all emotions or is not allowed to have strong feelings about difficult events. It just means that while you can not control outside circumstances, you can control your response to them. And, the goal is to respond rather than react to them.

For example, if you feel anger at a situation, the anger is telling you that

something needs to change there. The steps you might take are as follows: one, acknowledge your feelings of anger. Two, take a deep cleansing breath and look to see specifically what about the situation has triggered this emotion. Three, look to see if there are any positive actions you can take to affect change in this situation. Four, ask yourself if there is anything good that can come of this that you have not seen yet or that could follow in the future?

Another additional way to help retrain your thoughts is to practice gratitude. Start your day with five minutes of mentally listing the things for which you are grateful. As you go through your day, take a few moments now and then to fully sit in the energy of gratitude. You will be surprised how profoundly this simple task can affect you and your mindset. Additionally, you can also work with intentions. An intention is a verbal declaration of how you wish to be present in the world. For instance, you can set the intention before you leave the house that everyone you meet will be better for having come in contact with you. Aspire to be the pebble in the pond that ripples compassion and understanding for others. Does this mean that you will never have to deal with difficult people or situations again? No, but you will find that you have more resources to handle them better and that you are able to shake off their negativity easier.

These exercises are steps towards becoming a positive thinker and just like with any physical exercise, do not expect to be perfect right away. Show yourself compassion when and if you don't quite meet your expectations. You would not expect to be able to go out and run a marathon without training either.

What are the benefits of becoming a more positive thinker? Just on the physical level alone, the effect can be staggering.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the power of positive thinking has been linked to:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold

- Both psychological and physical well-being
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardship and times of stress.

On the emotional and spiritual levels you will start to notice most people responding to your positive energy and reflecting it back to you. So why not honor September 18th National Positive Thinking Day by deciding to take steps to be a more positive version of you!

"The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude." - Oprah Winfrey

"Whether you think you can, or think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford

"Love yourself. It is important to stay positive because beauty comes from the inside out." - Jenn Proske