

7 PRACTICAL TIPS TO ACHIEVE A POSITIVE MINDSET

Yes, we can!

The “power of positive thinking” is a popular concept, and sometimes it can feel a little cliché. But the physical and mental benefits of positive thinking have been demonstrated by multiple scientific studies. Positive thinking can give you more confidence, improve your mood, and even reduce the likelihood of developing conditions such as hypertension, depression and other stress-related disorders.

All this sounds great, but what does the “power of positive thinking” really mean?

You can define positive thinking as positive imagery, positive self-talk or general optimism, but these are all still general, ambiguous concepts. If you want to be effective in thinking and being more positive, you’ll need concrete examples to help you through the process.

Here are seven:

1. Start the day with positive affirmation.

How you start the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. Have you ever woken up late, panicked, and then felt like nothing good happened the rest of the day? This is likely because you started out the day with a negative emotion and a pessimistic view that carried into every other event you experienced. Instead of letting this dominate you, start your day with positive affirmations. Talk to yourself in the mirror, even if you feel silly, with statements like, “Today will be a good day” or “I’m going to be awesome today.” You’ll be amazed how much your day improves.

- Tell yourself these 3 positive things every day.

2. Focus on the good things, however small.

Almost invariably, you’re going to encounter obstacles throughout the day—there’s no such thing as a perfect day. When you encounter such a challenge, focus on the benefits, no matter how slight or unimportant they seem. For example, if you get stuck in traffic, think about how you now have time to listen to the rest of your favorite podcast. If the store is out of the food you want to prepare, think about the thrill of trying something new.

- Find your silver lining.

3. Find humor in bad situations.

Allow yourself to experience humor in even the darkest or most trying situations. Remind yourself that this situation will probably make for a good story later and try to crack a joke about it. Say you’re laid off; imagine the most absurd way you could spend your last day, or the most ridiculous job you could pursue next—like kangaroo handler or bubblegum sculptor.

- Adopt these 5 habits to become a happier you.

4. Turn failures into lessons.

You aren’t perfect. You’re going to make mistakes and experience failure in multiple contexts, at multiple jobs and with multiple people. Instead of focusing on how you failed, think about what you’re going to do next time—turn your failure into a lesson. Conceptualize this in concrete rules. For example, you could come up with three new rules for managing projects as a result.

- You’re going to fail. Learn to use it to your advantage.

5. Transform negative self-talk into positive self-talk.

Negative self-talk can creep up easily and is often hard to notice. You might think I’m so bad at this or I shouldn’t have tried that. But these thoughts turn into internalized feelings and might cement your conceptions of yourself. When you catch yourself doing this, stop and replace those negative messages with positive ones. For example, I’m so bad at this becomes Once I get more practice, I’ll be way better at this. I shouldn’t have tried becomes That didn’t work out as planned—maybe next time.

- Silence the negative voice in your head.

6. Focus on the present.

I’m talking about the present—not today, not this hour, only this exact moment. You might be getting chewed out by your boss, but what in this exact moment is happening that’s so bad? Forget the comment he made five minutes ago. Forget what he might say five minutes from now. Focus on this one, individual moment. In most situations, you’ll find it’s not as bad as you imagine it to be. Most sources of negativity stem from a memory of a recent event or the exaggerated imagination of a potential future event. Stay in the present moment.

- Be right where you are. Live in the moment.

7. Find positive friends, mentors and co-workers.

When you surround yourself with positive people,

you’ll hear positive outlooks, positive stories and positive affirmations. Their positive words will sink in and affect your own line of thinking, which then affects your words and similarly contributes to the group. Finding positive people to fill up your life can be difficult, but you need to eliminate the negativity in your life before it consumes you. Do what you can to improve the positivity of others, and let their positivity affect you the same way.

- Surround yourself with these 5 amazing people.

Almost anybody in any situation can apply these lessons to their own lives and increase their positive attitude. As you might imagine, positive thinking offers compounding returns, so the more often you practice it, the greater benefits you’ll realize.

Larry Alton is a professional blogger, writer and researcher who contributes to a number of reputable online media outlets and news sources, including Entrepreneur.com, HuffingtonPost.com and Business.com, among others. In addition to journalism, technical writing and in-depth research, he’s also active in his community and spends weekends volunteering with a local nonprofit literacy organization and rock climbing. Follow him on Twitter and LinkedIn.