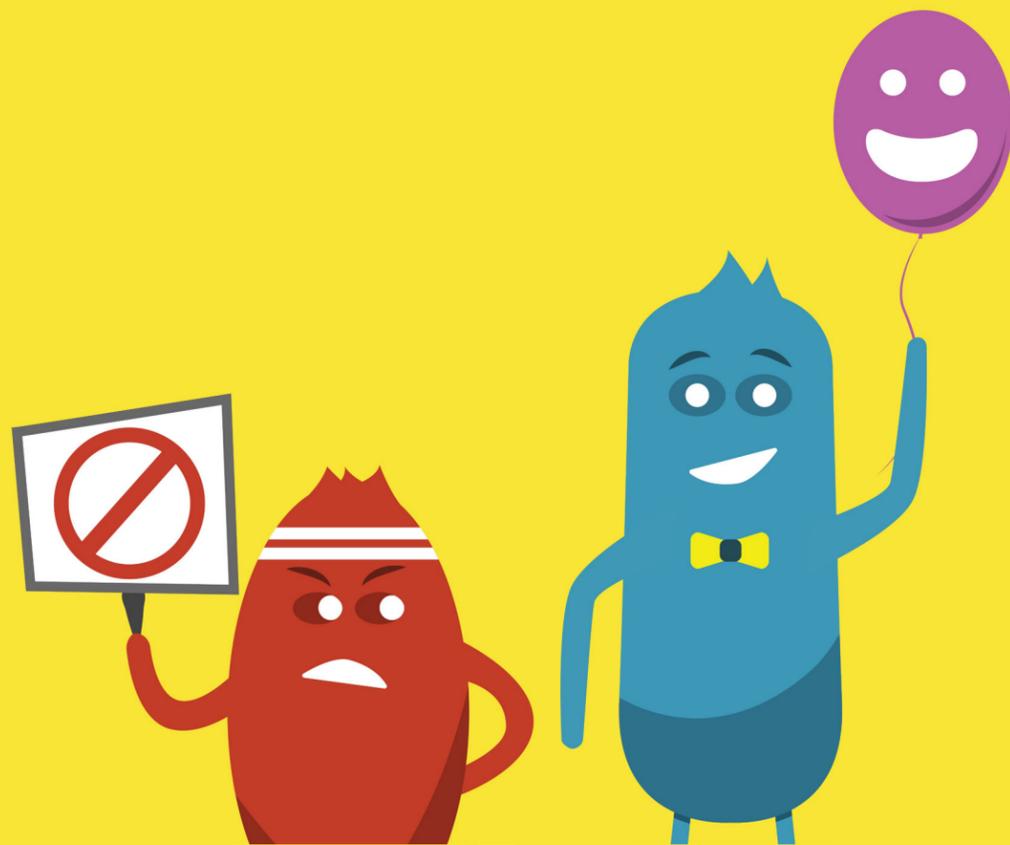


STAY POSITIVE



5 WAYS TO STAY POSITIVE WHEN YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY

Written By Matt Fore

It's Murphy's Law. The line you get in at the department store doesn't move because there is a lady at the register who waited until the last minute to dig through her overstuffed wallet for a coupon. So you change checkout lanes only to get stuck behind a man digging through a deep pocket for exact change.

We all have bad days when it seems like nothing is going right. But few can compete with Charles, a man who experienced a lifetime's worth of bad news in a single day.

Charles lived a stressful life. He worked from morning until night without any spare time for annoyances. Little did he know, when he woke up one morning, he had already lost more than \$200,000—embezzled from his inheritance by a family “friend.” In an unrelated turn of events, he lost his job the same day. That evening he discovered his wife was filing for divorce.

We don't have control over the way life plays out, but we do not have to be a victim to its tyranny. With a few savvy insights and positive action steps, we can power through almost anything that comes our way.

Here are five ways to stay upbeat and positive, even when life is not cooperating:

1. Develop a plan.

Often we just feel “off” and we let it affect our day without finding out what it is that made us feel down in the first place. So identify what's making you feel despondent. Be specific. And once that is done, make a plan. Write out what you can do to turn around your sour mood.

In her Psychology Today article, “Thirteen Small Decisions That Will Ease Anxiety,” Meg Selig writes, “If you start to ruminate over a situation that you've already planned for, tell yourself, ‘Stop, I've already made a plan.’” The very act of identifying and planning can result in tremendous stress relief.

2. Associate with winners.

We tend to think like the people we hang around. That's not news, but how often do we stop and notice who we talk to every day? The group that laments over a two-cent gas hike is not likely the same group that discusses the latest stock options. It's two different mindsets. The greatest investment for the worrywart is to find a cell of positive-

minded, successful people. How did they get where they are? How do they think? Let the osmosis begin.

3. Speak positive words.

We tend to believe what we say. Our minds literally go in the direction of our words. Of course, we can't talk ourselves into being taller, but we can have a more positive outlook by noticing the good, anticipating a positive outcome and speaking it out loud. It's almost impossible to shout, “I feel fantastic!” and be depressed at the same time. A few verbal affirmations throughout the day will go a long way toward lifting your spirits.

4. Laugh anyway.

There is so much to stress over these days—politics, the economy, the ozone layer, the missing button on your favorite shirt. Still, there is a consensus among many medical professionals that laughter will do you a world of good. In fact, the Mayo Clinic article “Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke” says, “A rollicking laugh fires up then cools down your stress response and it can increase your heart rate. The result? A good relaxed feeling.” To stay upbeat and positive, make laughter a deliberate part of your arsenal against the blues.

5. Execute.

Once you've identified what deflates your spirit, made a plan to overcome it and developed some mental weapons, it's time to bring out the big guns. Put your thoughts into action. It's hard to worry about a problem while you are busy solving it. This is no time to be passive. Get angry. Get aggressive. Attack your problems with a vengeance. What right do they have to destroy the pleasure you get out of life? The physical act of execution is a diabolical weapon against whatever ails you and can create a surprising sense of bliss in the midst of the turmoil.

Charles, who arguably had a much worse day than you, adjusted to his loss and even forgave his thieving friend. He used his skills to move forward in a new career and met a beautiful woman in the process. He learned a lot about himself, found some new priorities and doesn't stress about the length of a department store checkout lane. He is happier than he has been in a long time and looks for opportunities to share his success with others.

If Charles can do it, so can you.