



POSITIVITY





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Positivity

"There is little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative."

W. Clement Stone

Have you noticed how some people just seem to ooze confidence, always seem up when everybody else appears down? No matter what life throws at them, they tackle it head on and succeed where others may fail.

Success and happiness are not accidents that happen to some people and not to others. They are a direct result of our behaviours, which are in turn determined by our ways of thinking. In other words, **it is not what happens to us that is important, but the way we choose to interpret it, that shapes our lives. You cannot always change what happens to you, but you can certainly change the way that you perceive it.**

Is your glass half full or half empty?

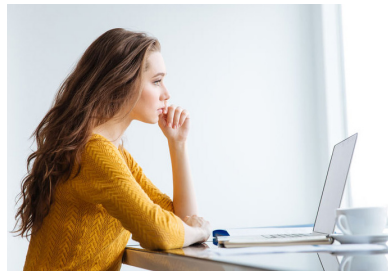
How we think and what we think has a huge impact on our life choices and how we see our world. Minute by minute, our thoughts dictate and navigate our journey through life. Research has discovered that the average human has 6,200 thoughts per day ⁽¹⁾, which is more than 250 thoughts per hour, or almost 400 per hour if we exclude 8 hours sleep.



In these difficult times, with so many fears and uncertainties, it can be difficult to remain positive. If we are to believe the 2005 research on human thoughts per day ⁽²⁾, the task becomes more arduous. This research found that on average the participants' thoughts were 80% negative, and that 95% were the same repetitive thoughts as the day before.

If you were to write down all the thoughts that pass through your mind each day, you could write a book each day! But would that book be something you would want others to read? In most cases, it would be a book full of unjustified worries, fears, regrets, and grumbles about ourselves and others, with very few positive chapters.

Our thoughts are in essence the reflections of our feelings. We do not choose to become angry and upset when criticised, just as you cannot help but feel surprised when someone sneaks up behind you and shouts, “SURPRISE!”. These involuntary responses help us avoid harm and in essence help us learn, they simply happen with or without your agreement.



Are you someone who is drawn more frequently to bad news rather than good? Do you find yourself dwelling on an insult, or fixating on your mistakes and allowing criticisms to have a greater impact than compliments? You are not alone. Psychologists refer to this as the negative bias and it can have a powerful effect on your behaviour, your decisions, and even your relationships.

When negative thoughts develop in our brain, we are tempted to struggle with them and try to insert a more positive notion in there. Unfortunately, our emotions have a tight hold on these negative thoughts, just like the cold beer that sits in the fridge on a hot day, or the chocolate cake in the kitchen cupboard when you are on a diet. They ‘eat away’ and get to you in the end.

If we are to create a positive outlook, we must first nip negativity in the bud. But as we have discovered, it has almost become second nature to see ourselves negatively, both on a national scale and as individuals. Globally, the 2019 World Happiness Report revealed negative feelings are rising around the world, despite continued economic growth. Similarly, as individuals we have a tendency to see ourselves in a negative light. When the cosmetic company Dove ran an advertising campaign, giving women the choice to walk through a door labelled 'average' or 'beautiful', a staggering 96 per cent of women around the world described themselves as average, leaving just 4 per cent to admit they consider themselves beautiful.

Do you see the hole or the donut?

Positive living is more than positive thought; it is about positive actions and positive intent. By learning to see ourselves in a positive light and focusing on what we have rather than what we do not have, we will be able to be happier and achieve more.



"The world is your mirror, and your mind is a magnet. What you perceive in this world is largely a reflection of your own attitudes and beliefs. Life will give you what you attract with your thoughts. Think, act and talk negatively and your world will be negative. Think and act and talk with enthusiasm and you will attract positive results."

Michael LeBoeuf

Develop and stay in a positive environment.

To cultivate and maintain a positive environment, it is essential to have influences in your life that support you and lift you up instead of pulling you down. Who you choose to devote your time with, and the input you receive from social media, TV and magazines will have a substantial impact on your perspective and viewpoint.

Who are the 2 most negative people you spend time with?

What are the 2 of most negative sources of information you spend time on?

Carefully consider your answers and then think about how you can create change by reducing your exposure to one of these people or information sources this week. Now you have created more time and 'headspace', with whom or which positive input will you devote your time to?

Mind your language

The words you use in conversation with others and in your own 'self-talk' have a huge influence on your mindset. Studies have found that positive self-talk enhances psychological states, which helps regulate emotions and much more. By renovating and upgrading your vocabulary, you endorse positive thinking and attitudes. Your conversations and your vocabulary influence how others respond to you, creating a feedback loop that can be either negative or positive.

The impact words we choose and their influence on our outlook and opportunities is developed further by author Robert Kiyosaki in his book, ***Rich Dad Poor Dad***. Kiyosaki describes the different ways of thinking between his two dads. The "poor dad" is Kiyosaki's biological father, a highly educated college professor. The "rich dad" is Kiyosaki's best friend's father, a wealthy entrepreneur who owns several businesses.

"Saying, '*I can't afford it*', shuts down your brain. It does not have to think anymore, besides, it also brings up sadness, a helplessness that leads to despondency and often depression.

'*How can I afford it?*' opens up the brain, forcing it to think and search for answers. It also opens up possibilities, excitement and dreams and created a stronger mind and dynamic spirit."

Robert Kiyosaki

So, the words we choose have a great part to play in shaping our choices and our opportunities, as does the time spent with others and the sources of media we follow. Every minute of every day, our mind is bombarded with thoughts, and as we have seen, not all thoughts are positive. Letting go of negativity is hard work and needs practicing day after day. If perfected, according to author and motivational speaker, Tony Robbins, opportunities abound.

“Whatever you hold in your mind on a consistent basis is exactly what you will experience in your life.”

Tony Robbins

If we choose to focus on the negatives, whether that be thoughts, occurrences or words of others, chances are we will experience more negatives. But when we focus on the positives, the world is our oyster!

The Man Who Thinks He Can:

If you think you are beaten, you are,
If you think that you dare not, you don't,
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you've lost,
For out in the world you'll find,
Success begins with a fellow's will,
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are,
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.

Walter D. Wintle

References

1. Dr Jordan Poppenk and his student Julie Tseng from Queen's University in Canada have established a method that, for the first time ever, can detect where one thought ends, and another begins.

2 Leahy, 2005, Study of Cornell University This research found that on average that the participants thoughts, were 80% negative and 95% were the same repetitive thoughts as the day before.