



EAP Educates: Living with a Positive Attitude

It is the start of a New Year, and with that come the inevitable New Year's resolutions which many of us don't maintain past a week. We are filled with grand ideas of starting afresh, but the pressures we had last month have not gone away, and after a traditionally raucous silly season, there may even be additional pressures. That doesn't mean that you can't choose to handle all these things in a positive way. People will often say, when you least feel like hearing it, that you should "Think Positive". This could be the best thing for both your emotional and physical health.

Attitude is defined as the mental position that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. An optimist is a person who maintains a positive attitude to life even when things don't go quite according to plan. Instead of focusing on the negative, an optimist will write it off as an isolated incident over which they had no control, and move on in a positive frame of mind believing that things will be better going forward. A pessimist has a tendency to dwell on the negative. They will always expect the worst of people and situations, and even when things look bright, they will find something negative to focus on.

Either which way, your approach to life is a habit, and habits can be changed. Below, you will find some tips on things you can do to change the way you approach your day. If you have a tendency to be pessimistic, acknowledge that and you can make a conscious effort to make a change. Your thoughts are entirely under your control, and with some practice, you can brighten the way you view your day.

- *Believe happiness is a choice* – You can choose how you respond to any situation at hand.
- *Rid your life of negativity* – Put yourself in situations that build you up not break you down.
- *Look for the positives in life* – Make a choice every day to find something positive around you that makes you smile.
- *Reinforce positivity in yourself* – Learn to love and accept yourself.
- *Share happiness with others* – The simplest way to achieve this is to be nice to people no matter what. Tell the lady in the cubical next door that she is looking lovely for example. It will lift you both.
- *Shift your thoughts* – When you find yourself focusing on a negative thought, purposefully shift your thought processes to see things in a positive way. Don't allow yourself to wallow in self-pity.
- *Find the lesson* – Sometimes things go wrong. Find the lesson and learn from the experience so that the outcome is positive.
- *Attitude of gratitude* – There are always things in life to be thankful for, even when life throws you a curve ball. You cannot be angry and grateful at the same time.
- *Positive affirmations and visualisations* – Practice seeing yourself in a positive and confident light.
- *Inventory of memories* – Keep at hand a list of memories that can immediately make you smile.
- *Criticising detox diet* - Change your approach and attitude. See if you can stop criticizing others and situations. Our cultural conditioning teaches us to find flaws and problems at all times. Shift from fault-finding to appreciation-finding.

Whether you are positive or negative, the situations you will find yourself in do not change, so you may as well be positive. That said, it is important to be a balanced optimist. Pretending that nothing bad can or ever will happen is insane. Life is not like that and doing so can lead to poor decisions and invites people to take advantage of you. Instead, be a rational optimist who takes the good with the bad, in hopes of the good ultimately outweighing the bad, and with the understanding that being pessimistic about everything accomplishes nothing. Prepare for the worst but hope for the best - the former makes you sensible, and the latter makes you an optimist.

Sources – thinksimplenow.com; wikihow.com; suite101.com

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