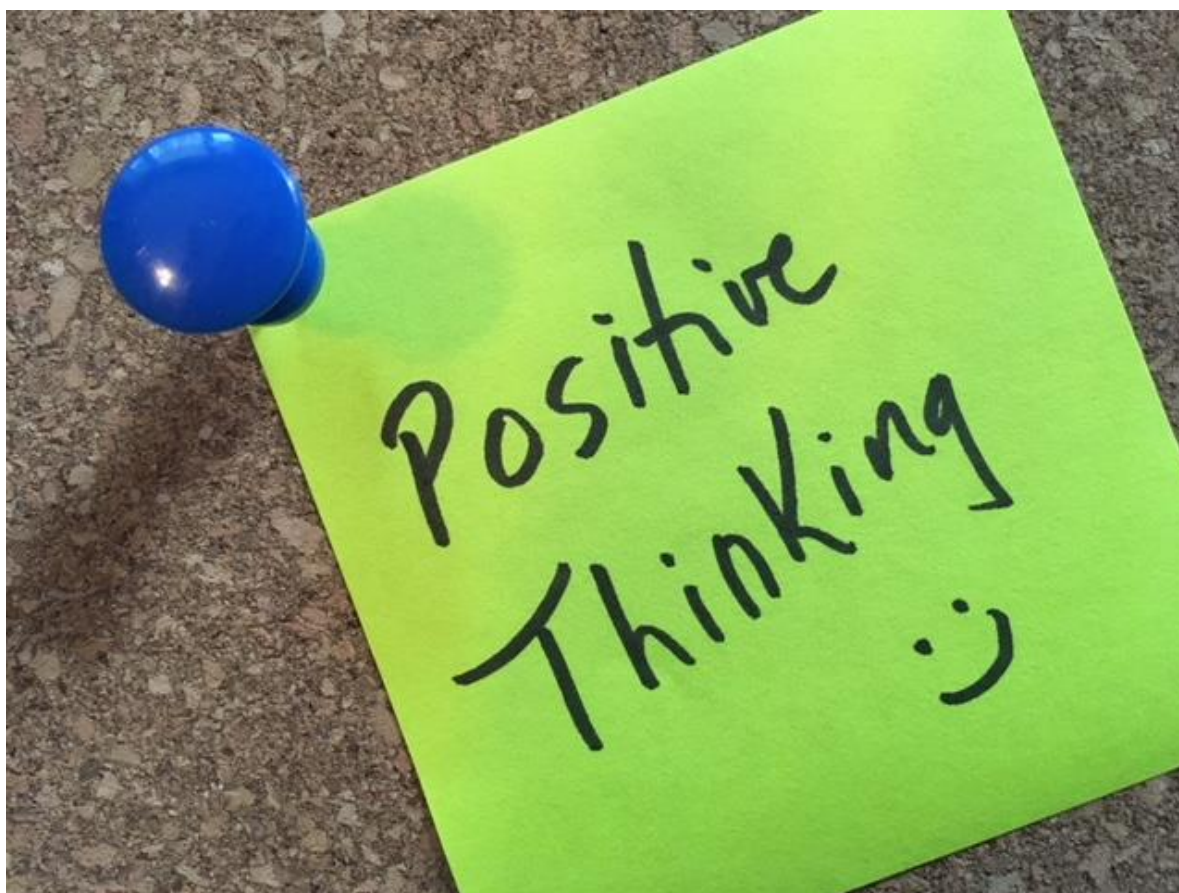


10 TIPS to Think More Positively



1. Surround yourself with positive people

Positive people have positive outlooks and stories which will impact your own thinking. You will also enjoy your day better and have more fun!

2. Be grateful

Start or end your day being grateful for what you have. Spend just a few minutes a day writing down the things you are grateful for in a gratefulness journal. Write down at least five things. If at first, you find you are struggling to find five things, simply look around you – do you have clothes in your

closet, clean underwear, clean socks, do you have a comfy bed, nice sheets, hot water for your shower, coffee brewing. Did you have a great conversation with your partner? Your child? Did you have a ton of ideas for your new project? This kind of thinking positively impacts the brain.

3. Start the day with positive intentions

Be intentional and set the tone for the day ahead. What kind of day do you want? How do you want to treat others and what can you do today to make that happen? How do you want to feel at the end of the day?

Set the tone with the kind of day you would like to have, and say it out loud, to yourself and to others. “This will be a great day,” “I am going to have a great day.” “I am going to find a solution to our work challenge.” “I am going to knock their socks off.” “I want to have great conversations with my co-workers.”

4. Label the emotion

Start a new habit of noticing your negative thoughts. When you have a negative thought, stop and ask yourself, “Where is this thought coming from?” Is it from worry, anger, fear, sadness, etc. Once you have labeled the thought with an emotion, take a deep breath, and know that *you are not that emotion* – you are just *having an emotion* and it will pass. This will help the part of the brain that causes you to have fight or flight responses to calm down.

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

When you are aware you are having a negative thought, stop, breathe, and replace it with a positive thought. E.g. If you are thinking, “I can’t do this,” or “I will never be able to think more positively,” say instead, “This new habit will just take time for me to learn and I know I can do it.” It will take time to start this new habit, however, if you are persistent, it will become easier. Be patient with yourself!

6. Stay focused in the present

You cannot change what happened yesterday or worry about tomorrow – the only control you have is the present moment. Practice mindfulness or being in the moment. Your will have a calmer brain and more positive thoughts.

7. Humour

Bring more humour into your life – read funny books, watch funny videos; listen to comedians, and even try and find the humour in tough situations. When you laugh, the brain releases feel good hormones and you feel good!

8. Look for what you learn when things go off the rails

When things don't go exactly as planned, or you don't get the outcome you wanted, don't look at the results or lack of results as a failure but rather look at it as a learning experience. Ask yourself, what you learned; what went well; and what will you do differently next time?

9. Stop making stuff up

When something bad happens or is not going your way, it is easy to start going down the path of making stuff up. Don't interpret, assume or make up a story of why this person said that; why your friend was late for your date; or why your partner didn't do the chores he said he would.

What this "story" (usually untrue) does is to succeed in creating negative emotions, causing the brain to "react" because it is feeling threatened by going into fight or flight mode, which causes stress hormones to be released into the body. Depending on how carried away you allow yourself to get with your made-up story, your brain will go into overdrive, activating the area of the brain which stores a lot of your old memories. Once triggered, the brain begins to remember other similar hurts and threats and lumps them together into a new movie or even bigger story blowing everything out of proportion.

If you find yourself making up a story about a person or a situation, first be aware you are doing this, then STOP, and focus on breathing until your brain calms down and the spiral of negative thoughts stop. (You can use the S.T.O.P. model in Part 3 of the Power Series.)

This is something that I started doing several years ago and I have really benefitted from this action. By doing this, it has saved me from having a lot of negative emotions and having a negative attitude toward the person who I imagined had 'slighted' me and it was not even the case. This practice really helps to calm down the brain.

10. Quiet your Brain

Between our busy days filled with all of things we need to get done both at work and home, keeping on top of our social media, the latest YouTube videos and 24-hour news channels, our brain is rarely quiet and doesn't have the opportunity to rest and recharge.

The good news? By taking just a few minutes a day to quiet the brain will help to calm the brain, clear your mind, allow fresh ideas to come forward, and decrease your level of stress.

Quiet your brain by taking a few minutes out of your day and just breathe.

- Find a nice spot to sit in, with feet flat on the floor, hands in your lap.
- Focus on your happy place; on the tip of your nose; or on your in breath.
- Breathe from your belly.
- If you start having thoughts (and you will), just notice, and go back to your focus.

Start with a minute at a time and work your way up to 10 minutes. You can do this anytime you feel stressed, are having a lot of negative thoughts, when you need clarity or a fresh new perspective. Notice your thought patterns and how you feel after your focused breathing.

Start by applying just one of these tips this week and see how your mindset changes from a negative one to more positive and how this impacts your attitude, emotions, beliefs and ultimately your behaviour.

Remember that your thoughts create your attitudes, and your attitudes determine your world, so decide on the world you want and change your thoughts to create it. Start taking control of your thoughts for a more joyous life.