THE CATALYST

How to shape your mindset for a positive outlook

Like flying above storm clouds, perspective shifts everything. Positive thinking lowers stress and builds resilience.

By: Eric Gronke | Posted: April 28, 2022

Picture yourself on an airplane, rain pelting against the windows as you accelerate down the runway. Its gloomy, wet, and dark. With clouds masking the horizon, you begin to lift off, and as the plane stutters, you continue to climb through the storm. Suddenly, you emerge out of the darkness and into the daylight. Blue skies as far as the eye can see. It's beautiful, calm and inviting.

What changed? It didn't stop raining for those in the town below you. The clouds didn't magically disappear and let the sun shine down. All that changed was your perspective. Where you focus your time and energy can determine which reality you choose to sustain. Every day is sunny above the clouds.

Positive thinking can have a major impact on your overall well-being, with effects ranging from lower levels of stress to greater resistance to the common cold, and even increased lifespan.

Four ways to help develop a positive outlook on life

Practice Gratitude

Place your focus on things you are grateful for in life, no matter how insignificant they may seem. Write them down and look through them when you are facing moments of doubt.

Tip: Did you know that how you react in the first five minutes of your morning can impact your mood for the entire day? Instead of reaching for your phone to check texts, social media, and emails, try reciting five things that you are grateful for each morning and observe if it has a positive impact on your mindset throughout the day.

Focus only on things within your control

Life is full of challenges and uncertainty. When facing a new adventure, focus only on what is within your control and pay little attention to the rest. Be prepared, keep an open mind, and remember that some of life's greatest accomplishments come from our hardest challenges.

Tip: If you are worried about a situation, write down everything you are worried about. Then, cross out the things you cannot control and deal with the things that you can.

Surround yourself with positive influences

It is said that your mindset and attitude are the reflection of the five people you spend the most time with and that you become what you set your focus on. If that is the case, then you cannot expect yourself to be positive if you consistently surround yourself with negativity. Whether it's the individuals you're spending time with, or the content you're ingesting on social media, be mindful of the impact it can have on your mindset. Take the time to seek out positive news, celebrate small victories and surround yourself with people that uplift you.

Tip: If you are trying to decide whether to continue investing yourself in a relationship or a friendship, give all that you can to that individual for two weeks, and be the best friend, partner, or colleague that you can be. If they don't make an effort to change after you have given it your all, then you will be able to move on confidently, knowing there was nothing more you could give.

Incorporate positive language

The language you use can also impact your outlook. We often use negative self-talk in situations where we lack confidence. For example, we may say "It's too complicated" or "I have never done this before" when trying something new for the first time. While statements like this may seem harmless, they can slowly deteriorate our outlook on life. Instead of using negatively focused language, try to use words that are uplifting and help maintain a positive outlook on the situation.

Tip: Instead of saying 'I've never done this before' try saying 'this is an opportunity to learn something new'. Small changes like this can have a big impact on our overall outlook on life over time. Strive to see the positive in every situation and speak it into existence when possible.

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