

Positive Thinking as the Key to Success

Positive Thinking as the **Key to Success**

How Positive Thinking Can Be A Great Tool
Towards Leading **A Successful Life**



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The image shows a diverse group of young adults in a classroom setting, all giving a thumbs-up gesture. The background is a bright, modern classroom with large windows. The text is overlaid in white and red on the image.

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Chapter 1: The Key to Success

Anyone who has ever actively pursued a goal knows that it isn't always easy. Even when you're doing something you're great at, you will still encounter challenges and obstacles that must be overcome before you reach your goal. An optimistic attitude will go a long way towards ensuring that the goals you set out to meet are actually met.

Have you ever known someone that has dreams, desires and aspirations but every time they mention them, they immediately put it down in the same breath? After a while you stop believing that person will ever pursue those dreams and when they're mentioned, you may not even pay much attention to what's being said. Eventually you might even dismiss that person as someone who talks but never executes anything. Imagine if you were that person? Imagine how it would feel if you were filled with dreams, desires and aspirations but you never actually followed through on anything? You would eventually stop dreaming.

That is not the way to go. You should never stop dreaming. You should never stop pursuing your goals. While it's imperative that you act on your dreams and aspirations, it's even more imperative that you adopt a positive attitude about your actions. Positive thinking is the best way for you to internally support yourself as you pursue your dreams. You may think that positive thinking is easy and just requires that you don't focus on the negative aspects of things. Unfortunately it's not always that easy. When

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you're in a moment of frustration where it feels like everything is falling apart around you, not focusing on the negative can be a challenge. It can even be a challenge to focus on the positive when things are going well. Positive thinking must be done consistently so that it becomes a habit. There are some tools you can use to incorporate positive thinking into your everyday life and work to make it a habit.

1. Vision Boards

Vision boards are essentially poster boards or electronic boards that you can put pictures or words on with the sole purpose of inspiring you to pursue your goals. Many people will get a poster board from the office supply store and tape or paste pictures from a magazine on it. These should be pictures of things, places or situations that you want to have in your life. You can also tape or paste positive words on the board. Once you've created your vision board, you should hang it in a place where you can see it regularly.

The point of the vision board is for you to see your goals. It helps you to stay focused on what you're working to achieve if you are looking at it on a regular basis. You can also create a vision board online using a social media website like Pinterest or photo collage programs. No matter how you create your vision board, the key is to use it to focus on goals you're currently working to reach and put it somewhere you can see it often, ideally daily. The more you see your vision board, the more you're reminded what you're working towards. This is especially helpful when you hit a rough spot or things are moving more slowly than you planned.

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2. Affirmations

Affirmations are very positive statements that address specific situations you may be dealing with. For example, if you're having money troubles and want to use affirmations to help you think positively about the situation you could say this affirmation: *I am financially solvent and I have everything I need to thrive*. You should repeat an affirmation multiple times. You can use an affirmation as a part of meditation. Some people meditate on an affirmative phrase to cement it into their thoughts and psyche. You can also just repeat an affirmation multiple times throughout the day. To help you get started using affirmations, here are some examples that can be easily incorporated into your everyday life.

- a. For health: My body is a temple and it is healthy and strong.
- b. For success: The success I seek is flying towards me at a rapid pace and I am prepared to receive it.
- c. For love: My heart and mind are ready and open to receive the love that is coming my way.
- d. For right circumstances: I am doing everything that is right within myself and it will work in my favor quickly.

3. Positive Speech

Many of us say the most negative things to ourselves when we're talking about goals we want to accomplish. Either we tell ourselves that we can't do what we want because we're not smart enough, strong enough or brave enough. This type of speech is easy to fix.

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When we say we want to do something, we shouldn't automatically dismiss it or say it won't work. We have to tell ourselves that no matter how challenging it may seem we can do it. Then we have to do it. That's the most black and white element of positive speech but there's a gray area that many people miss. Using words like if, try, maybe and might can be just as damaging as completely dismissing our thoughts. Below are some examples of negative speech and how it can be turned to positive speech.

- a. I want to go to college to get my degree and if I get into USC, I will be very happy.
 - a. I want to go to college to get my degree and when I get into USC, I will be very happy.

If you notice, using if in the first sentence gives you permission to fail but by substituting if for when, you express your confidence that you will indeed get into that particular school.

- b. I'm going to try to jog around my neighborhood Saturday.
 - a. I'm going to jog around my neighborhood Saturday.

If you notice, using try in the first sentence gives you permission to fail but by removing the try, you express that will actually accomplish the task.

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- c. I'm going to buy a juicer to help me eat more fruits and vegetables. It might work.
 - a. I'm going to buy a juicer to help me eat more fruits and vegetables. It will work.

If you notice, using might in the first sentence gives you permission to fail but by changing might to will makes it a much more definitive statement.

- d. I would love to visit London next year. Maybe I'll be able to do it in September.
 - a. I would love to visit London next year. I'll be doing it in September.

If you notice, using maybe in the first two sentences gives you permission not to go on the trip but by removing the word you are saying you will definitely go.

Using positive speech is a very powerful tool to help you think more positively. Consider that the words coming out of your mouth are heard most loudly and clearly by your own ears. No matter what you say to someone else, you always hear it first. If the words you use are positive and affirmative, you will constantly hear positive speech which will ultimately affect the way you think. Because your words are a direct reflection of your thoughts, when you use positive words it means your thoughts will reflect those same words.

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4. Gratitude

By practicing gratitude regularly, you make a decision to focus on the positive aspects of every situation you encounter, the negative ones and the positive ones. When you actively work to practice gratitude you will have to consciously assess your life for learning opportunities to be grateful for. This is usually very easy when things are positive and going well. It's tougher to be grateful when things aren't as positive. You may have to really work to find the opportunities for gratitude. But when you make this a regular practice you will soon realize that you can find the positive in even the most negative situation.

One of the best ways to consistently practice gratitude is to use a journal. It's not unlike a regular journal where you share your innermost thoughts, feelings and ideas. In a gratitude journal, you make it a point to share something about the day that you are grateful for. Initially it may be challenging to do it every day but make it a point to sit down and write something. Over time it will become easier to express your gratitude towards your daily experiences. You will soon discover that you are actively looking for things to be grateful for every day. Once you're in that mind space, you will live in a consistent space of gratitude.

5. Pep Talks

Sometimes you may feel beaten down by circumstances or life in general. Ideally you would have your own personal coach who would come in and give you a pep talk. Some people are blessed with this

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type of person and can truly benefit from their presence. Most people don't have that kind of person around on a regular basis. Yes your friends can help in this instance but they may not always be available to be your personal coach. They have their own lives to live and as much as they may love and care for you, it's not their responsibility to pick you up every time you need it. It is, however, your own responsibility to pick yourself up.

Giving yourself an internal pep talk can go a long way towards boosting you up and giving you the strength to press on. You can do this verbally, internally or in writing. Depending on the mode of communication that works best for you, there are options. In fact, you can even utilize all three at any given time. There is no specific formula for how you boost yourself up and bolster your own self esteem with positive self-talk. That's the great thing about positive thinking. There's no right or wrong way to encourage yourself.

In order to lead a successful life, you must first define what a successful life looks like to you. Then you have to courageously pursue that vision of success but you must do it by incorporating positive thinking. Actively pursuing success can be exhilarating and challenging at the same time. You will feel wonderful highs and tough lows but if you are able to use the above mentioned tools to ensure that you maintain a positive outlook you will be able to navigate through it all much more effectively than without positive thinking.

Chapter 2: Case Studies That'll Inspire You

Sometimes it's most helpful to read stories of people who have actively used positive thinking on their road to success to truly see how it can benefit you. Seeing positive thinking in action makes it easier to see how you can incorporate into your life. Below are two case studies or stories of people who have been successful largely in part thanks to their use of positive thinking and the above mentioned tools.

Suze Orman

Suze Orman is one of the most well-known financial gurus. She has written several best-selling books and is regularly seen sharing her brutally honest financial advice on popular talk shows, in well-attended talks all over the country and on her own show that airs on CNBC, The Suze Orman Show. Best known for her no-nonsense financial advice, people count on her to help bring them back to earth when it comes to how they deal with their finances.

What a lot of people don't know about Suze Orman is where she started. She didn't start out wanting to be a financial guru and coach. She started out going to school for social work but dropped out before finishing her degree. She then traveled to Berkeley, California where she got a job as a waitress at a bakery and did that work for seven years.

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An entrepreneur at heart, Suze took her waitressing experience and decided she wanted to open her own bakery. She raised \$50,000 towards her new venture and turned to Merrill Lynch to protect her money and grow the investment. Although she made only \$400 a month as a waitress and needed the money to be safe until she was ready to open her business, the broker she worked with at Merrill Lynch channeled it into a risky investment. He didn't provide all of the information she needed to truly assess the investment and talked her into signing over her \$50,000.

She lost all of her money within three months. Frustrated, Suze dove headfirst into the world of investments and finances, determined to learn everything she could. She gained a lot of knowledge and decided to become a financial advisor herself. She applied to the same company where she'd lost her investment money and was hired to fill their "woman quota". She was told that there was no place for her in that business and she would be gone within six months. During her training she realized that the way her broker handled her money was actually against company policy. She successfully sued Merrill Lynch for her lost \$50,000 and won. The company settled with her out of court. In spite of the lawsuit she stayed with Merrill Lynch and continued to use her newfound financial expertise to service her clients.

By incorporating the affirmation, "I have more money than I will ever need" into her daily life, Suze used positive thinking to keep her going when times got tough. Although she was told she wouldn't last six

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months in the financial industry, Suze worked hard and did a lot of good work for her customers. She eventually left Merrill Lynch to be the vice president of another financial services firm before starting her own business in 1987.

Her firm did well and she continued to provide good advice to her clients until she wrote her first book in 1995, *You've Earned It, Don't Lose It*. She went on a book tour which helped the book to sell about 700,000 copies. Then her next book, *The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom*, went on to become a New York Times Best Seller selling over 3 million copies. She started out writing her books as tools to give to her clients and became a best-selling author. Since then, Suze Orman has gone on to become the financial guru that she is known as today. She got her first exposure on a radio show. She wrote in complaining because an investment expert who'd appeared on the show gave some incorrect advice. The show host invited her to come on and she did.

Since then she has become the voice of realistic financial advice. On her television show, she often shares her affirmation with the audience and encourages them to repeat it, or one with a similar message, for themselves until they believe it to be true.

Her use of an affirmation was a powerful tool that kept her centered on her ultimate goal as she moved through life. Now she definitely has more money than she will ever need and she actively works to help others improve their money situation as well.

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Will Smith

Will Smith is one of the most well-known celebrities in Hollywood. He started out as a rapper in the 1980's during a time when hip hop was crossing over to mainstream culture. Will Smith was one of the rappers who focused on telling stories and fun times in his music. His brand of rap was referred to as party rap at the time. His feel good brand of rap made his music very cross over friendly.

Over time, Will branched out and moved into the acting arena. One of his early projects, *Six Degrees of Separation* had Will playing a man who is a con man but also a homosexual whose true colors are eventually exposed in the film when he brings home a hustler. *Six Degrees of Separation* was based on the true story of David Hampton, a homosexual con man who posed as Sidney Poitier's son and conned quite a few celebrities and Manhattan socialites before going to jail in the 80's. This was a courageous choice for Will because his background was steeped in the hip hop industry which hasn't historically been known as a community open to homosexuality of any kind, real or not.

During this time, Will was also making a name for himself in the world of sitcoms on his show, *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. An unknown in the acting community, he was the star of the show which was a staple in homes in the 90's. The show centered around a kid from West Philadelphia that was sent to Bel-Air in California to live with his Aunt and Uncle and their family. It touched on many different social issues

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relevant at the time and Will's acting skills grew considerably during the show's six year run.

Since the show has gone off the air, Will has gone on to become one of the most well-known actors in Hollywood. At one point, he was one of the highest paid, garnering a pay check of millions of dollars per film.

As one of the most influential cross over actors that started in the music industry, Will is vocal about his belief in positive thinking and focusing on success. He constantly speaks about his need to connect with the universe in order to fully experience your own power. He also believes that people control their own destinies through the power of thought. He is so vocal about his feelings on positive thinking and how it can affect your life that there are websites with sections dedicated to quotes from him.

Here are a few:

"The first step is you have to say that you can. It's all about attitude. Whatever goal you want to reach, whatever you want to do in life, your success originates from your attitude. And it's got to be a good one. Believe that you can, and you'll never know what you can achieve in life."

"Those who constantly think positive thoughts will generally attract more positive things into their life. You don't have to believe this but if your life is full of challenges and negativity, try thinking more

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positively and see how your life will start to change. Once you see this happening, you will start to see the power of positive thinking.”

“There’s this delusional quality that all successful people have to have. You have to believe that something different than has happened for the last 50 million years of history. You have to believe something different can happen.”

Jerry’s Story

This is a very popular story used very often to illustrate the power of positive thinking. I’m not sure of the origin of it but it goes a long way towards showing how getting into the habit of thinking positively is a great tool for survival. Even if it’s fictional, the lesson shared is just as valuable and powerful than if it were a true story but the author is unknown.

Jerry is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, “If I were any better, I would be twins!” He was a unique manager because he had several waiters who had followed him around from restaurant to restaurant. The reason the waiters followed Jerry was because of his attitude. He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Jerry was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

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Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Jerry and asked him, "I don't get it! You can't be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?"

Jerry replied, "Each morning I wake up and say to myself, Jerry, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood. Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life."

"Yeah, right, it's not that easy," I protested.

"Yes it is," Jerry said. "Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It's your choice how you live life."

I reflected on what Jerry said. Soon thereafter, I left the restaurant industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it. Several years later, I heard that Jerry did something you are never supposed to do in a restaurant business: he left the back door open one morning and was held up at gunpoint by three armed robbers. While trying to open the safe, his hand, shaking from nervousness,

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slipped off the combination. The robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, Jerry was found relatively quickly and rushed to the local trauma center.

After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital with fragments of the bullets still in his body.

I saw Jerry about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, "If I were any better, I'd be twins. Wanna see my scars?"

I declined to see his wounds, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place. "The first thing that went through my mind was that I should have locked the back door," Jerry replied. "Then, as I lay on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live." "Weren't you scared? Did you lose consciousness?" I asked.

Jerry continued, "The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read 'he's a dead man'. I knew I needed to take action."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me," said Jerry. "She asked if I was allergic to anything. 'Yes' I replied. The

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doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, 'Bullets!' Over their laughter, I told them, 'I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead'."

Jerry lived thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully. Attitude, after all, is everything.

These three stories about positive thinking illustrate how it can go a long way towards living a successful life even as your definition of success changes. If you need some quotes or affirmations to begin to incorporate into your life, the affirmations and thoughts shared by each of the stories are a great place to start. By making it a habit of thinking positively in all situations when you need it most, it will be second nature.

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Chapter 3: Conclusion

There are many people who may speak out against the power of positive thinking. While their arguments may have some merit, it stands to reason that working to incorporate positive thinking into your day to day existence won't harm you in any way but it can definitely help you. However, those same people who question positive thinking can't refute the harm that negative thinking can cause.

There is, in fact, a medical determination that supports the ill effects that negative thinking can cause. It's called the nocebo effect. Many people who aren't a part of the medical community aren't aware of the profound nature of suggestion in the field of medicine. Its most often discussed when referring to the placebo effect which is what happens when someone is given a sugar pill but told that it's a form of medication being used to treat a condition that the person has. The placebo effect is a real thing and can work anywhere from 18-80 percent of the time. It's been medically proven that when someone is given a placebo but told that it's an actual treatment, that person can experience actual physical changes in relation to what they've been told about the placebo.

On the flip side, there's also the nocebo effect which is when the most negative outcome can come to pass if the suggestion is made and taken by the person receiving the suggestion. When a doctor tells a patient that they

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have an incurable condition or disease and they will die or experience some negative effects as a result of the condition, studies have shown that the chances that the person will truly experience those negative effects or die increase. For example, in a study where people were given pills, placebo or not, and told that the pills could cause serious side effects 25 percent of those people actually experienced the side effects. In other cases where someone was told that he/she had an incurable disease and would die within a specified time frame, some people actually died even when there was nothing physically wrong with them which is shown after an autopsy is performed.

The nocebo effect is an extreme example of how negative thinking can have a negative effect on people. So when someone speaks against the power of positive thinking, it's important to realize the potentially harmful effects of negative thinking. Even if you have a hard time believing that thinking positive will have a positive effect on your life, it's never a bad idea to practice something that is positive.

When you have a goal and are working towards successfully reaching that goal, don't you want to employ as many strategies and tactics possible to ensure that you are successful? Positive thinking is a wonderful strategy to utilize and the tactics mentioned in this report: affirmations, positive speech, vision boards and gratitude go a long way towards supporting that strategy.

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“You cannot tailor-make the situations in life but you can tailor-make the attitudes to fit those situations.”

~ Zig Ziglar

Ultimately when you are working towards success you must be in it for the long haul. You can't expect success to happen overnight. In the real world, there is no such thing as overnight success. Even people who appear to have had sudden success really haven't. Whenever they interview singers who seem to come out of nowhere and ask them the secret of their overnight success many of them laugh. They usually follow that laugh up with a story about how they'd been pursuing their career for many years before they became an “overnight success”.

No one in any industry experiences long term success suddenly. It's important to realize that success is a marathon, not a sprint. When you're running a marathon, you have to be mentally strong as well as physically strong. Oftentimes the one thing that will get you through those tough moments when you feel like you want to quit or take the easy road is your mind. In those moments, the only person who can pull you up and get you back in the game is yourself. It would be great to have your own personal coach who would bark at you when you were lagging behind or give you a hug when you made important strides in your life.

The wonderful thing is that you do have that coach. You are your own coach. If your coach is constantly putting you down and telling you that you cannot succeed, you will eventually stop trying. If you consider your

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thoughts as your own personal coach, you will be able to separate them from who you are and you won't feel odd about giving yourself pep talks, creating a vision board, practicing positive speech, saying affirmations or practicing gratitude. You should never feel odd about doing what is necessary to fully support yourself in every way possible.

Life has its ups and downs and no matter how hard you may try, you can't control it. You can, however, control your attitude and how you react to life's ups and downs. When you're working towards having a successful life, you need all of the help you can get. It's a great idea to enlist the help of family members and friends who love and care about you. It's even great to join a group of people who can provide some very valuable support. However, when you are alone in your head with your own thoughts, you need to be able to also support yourself.

You can lean on others for help but you shouldn't depend on them. Just like you can't control what may happen in life, you can't control people and how they support you. Having a positive attitude is the one thing you can truly control on life's journey. It doesn't hurt to have one. Plus people attract other people like them. When you exude positivity, you will be much more likely to attract other positive people. Surrounding yourself with positive people is a great way to ensure your success. Even if those people aren't there to offer support on a daily basis, you can really benefit from the combined positive energy they will bring to your life while they're in it. When it comes to traveling down the road to success you can never have too much positivity.