7 Practical Tips to Achieve a Positive Mindset

The “power of positive thinking” is a popular concept, and sometimes it can feel a little cliché. But the physical and mental benefits of positive thinking have been demonstrated by multiple scientific studies. Positive thinking can give you more confidence, improve your mood, and even reduce the likelihood of developing conditions such as hypertension, depression and other stress-related disorders.

Here are seven examples to be effective in thinking and being more positive:

1. **Start the day with positive affirmation.**
   How you start the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day. Have you ever woken up late, panicked, and then felt like nothing good happened the rest of the day? This is likely because you started out the day with a negative emotion and a pessimistic view that carried into every other event you experienced. Instead of letting this dominate you, start your day with positive affirmations. Talk to yourself in the mirror, even if you feel silly, with statements like, “Today will be a good day” or “I’m going to be awesome today.” You’ll be amazed how much your day improves.

2. **Focus on the good things, however small.**
   Almost invariably, you’re going to encounter obstacles throughout the day—there’s no such thing as a perfect day. When you encounter such a challenge, focus on the benefits, no matter how slight or unimportant they seem. For example, if you get stuck in traffic, think about how you now have time to listen to the rest of your favorite podcast. If the store is out of the food you want to prepare, think about the thrill of trying something new.

3. **Find humor in bad situations.**
   Allow yourself to experience humor in even the darkest or most trying situations. Remind yourself that this situation will probably make for a good story later and try to crack a joke about it. Say you’re laid off; imagine the most absurd way you could spend your last day, or the most ridiculous job you could pursue next—like kangaroo handler or bubblegum sculptor.

4. **Turn failures into lessons.**
   You aren’t perfect. You’re going to make mistakes and experience failure in multiple contexts, at multiple jobs and with multiple people. Instead of focusing on how you failed, think about what you’re
going to do next time—turn your failure into a lesson. Conceptualize this in concrete rules. For example, you could come up with three new rules for managing projects as a result.

5. **Transform negative self-talk into positive self-talk.**
   Negative self-talk can creep up easily and is often hard to notice. You might think *I’m so bad at this or I shouldn’t have tried that.* But these thoughts turn into internalized feelings and might cement your conceptions of yourself. When you catch yourself doing this, stop and replace those negative messages with positive ones. For example, *I’m so bad at this* becomes *Once I get more practice, I’ll be way better at this.* *I shouldn’t have tried becomes That didn’t work out as planned—maybe next time.*

6. **Focus on the present.**
   I’m talking about the *present*—not today, not this hour, only this exact moment. You might be getting chewed out by your boss, but what in *this exact moment* is happening that’s so bad? Forget the comment he made five minutes ago. Forget what he might say five minutes from now. Focus on this one, individual moment. In most situations, you’ll find it’s not as bad as you imagine it to be. Most sources of negativity stem from a memory of a recent event or the exaggerated imagination of a potential future event. Stay in the present moment.

7. **Find positive friends, mentors and co-workers.**
   When you surround yourself with positive people, you’ll hear positive outlooks, positive stories and positive affirmations. Their positive words will sink in and affect your own line of thinking, which then affects your words and similarly contributes to the group. Finding positive people to fill up your life can be difficult, but you need to eliminate the negativity in your life before it consumes you. Do what you can to improve the positivity of others, and let their positivity affect you the same way.

Almost anybody in any situation can apply these lessons to their own lives and increase their positive attitude. As you might imagine, positive thinking offers compounding returns, so the more often you practice it, the greater benefits you’ll realize.

*Source:* Success.com, written by Larry Alton
POSITIVE THINKING: STOP NEGATIVE SELF-TALK TO REDUCE STRESS

Is your glass half-empty or half-full? How you answer this age-old question about positive thinking may reflect your outlook on life, your attitude toward yourself, and whether you’re optimistic or pessimistic — and it may even affect your health.

Indeed, some studies show that personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management. And effective stress management is associated with many health benefits. If you tend to be pessimistic, don’t despair — you can learn positive thinking skills.

Identifying negative thinking
Not sure if your self-talk is positive or negative? Some common forms of negative self-talk include:

- **Filtering.** You magnify the negative aspects of a situation and filter out all of the positive ones. For example, you had a great day at work. You completed your tasks ahead of time and were complimented for doing a speedy and thorough job. That evening, you focus only on your plan to do even more tasks and forget about the compliments you received.

- **Personalizing.** When something bad occurs, you automatically blame yourself. For example, you hear that an evening out with friends is canceled, and you assume that the change in plans is because no one wanted to be around you.

- **Catastrophizing.** You automatically anticipate the worst. The drive-through coffee shop gets your order wrong and you automatically think that the rest of your day will be a disaster.

- **Polarizing.** You see things only as either good or bad. There is no middle ground. You feel that you have to be perfect or you’re a total failure.

Focusing on positive thinking
You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you’re creating a new habit, after all. Here are some ways to think and behave in a more positive and optimistic way:
Identify areas to change. If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you usually think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute or a relationship. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.

Check yourself. Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.

Be open to humor. Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.

Follow a healthy lifestyle. Aim to exercise for about 30 minutes on most days of the week. You can also break it up into 10-minute chunks of time during the day. Exercise can positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn techniques to manage stress.

Surround yourself with positive people. Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your ability to manage stress in healthy ways.

Practice positive self-talk. Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you. Think about things you're thankful for in your life.

Practicing positive thinking every day
If you tend to have a negative outlook, don't expect to become an optimist overnight. But with practice, eventually your self-talk will contain less self-criticism and more self-acceptance. You may also become less critical of the world around you.

When your state of mind is generally optimistic, you’re better able to handle everyday stress in a more constructive way. That ability may contribute to the widely observed health benefits of positive thinking.

Source: Mayo Clinic (read full article here)
A GROWTH MINDSET VERSUS A FIXED MINDSET

What is the Definition of a Growth Mindset?
A growth mindset is “the understanding that abilities and understanding can be developed” (Mindset Works, n.d.). Those with a growth mindset believe that they can get smarter, more intelligent, and more talented through putting in time and effort.

Growth-mindset is about achieving mastery and competence. The person believes that superb personal qualities can be learned, developed or cultivated. So, she views failure only as feedback about her performance, and not as a judgement of her personality, potential or value. Therefore, a person with a growth mindset feels eager to learn to boost her performance and enjoys exploring, experimenting and stretching herself. She is not sensitive to criticisms and setbacks don’t hurt her so hard.

What is a Fixed Mindset?
A fixed mindset is one that assumes abilities and understanding are relatively fixed. Those with a fixed mindset may not believe that intelligence can be enhanced, or that you either “have it or you don’t” when it comes to abilities and talents.

Much of what we think about our personality, drive or setbacks, actually grows out of our mindset. In a fixed-mindset, the aim is to achieve validation. The person constantly tries to prove himself and is highly sensitive to being wrong or making a mistake. So, failure brings him doubt, demeans his character, and destroys his confidence. As a result, a person with a fixed mindset always feels anxious and is vulnerable to setbacks or criticisms.

What is the Main Difference?
The main difference between the two mindsets is the belief in the permanence of intelligence and ability. One views it as very permanent, with little to no room for change in either direction, while the other views it as more changeable, with opportunities for improvement (or, for that matter, regression).

This difference in mindset may lead to marked differences in behavior as well. If someone believes intelligence and abilities are immutable traits, they are not likely to put in much effort to change their inherent intelligence and abilities. On the other hand, those who believe they can change these traits may be much more willing to put in extra time and effort to achieve more ambitious goals. With a growth mindset, individuals may achieve more than others because they are worrying less about seeming smart or talented and putting more of their energy into learning.
Nurturing the Growth Mindset

Think of your effort as a sign of your strength not as a confirmation of your shortcomings. Think of learning as a joyful and constructive process rather than a chore that exposes your inadequacies. For specific techniques you can use to start building a growth mindset now, try these suggestions:

- Acknowledge and embrace your imperfections; don’t hide from your weaknesses.
- View challenges as opportunities for self-improvement.
- Try different learning tactics and strategies; don’t consider any strategies one-size-fits-all.
- Replace the word “failing” with the word “learning” in your vocabulary.
- Stop seeking approval from others and prioritize learning over approval.
- Value the learning process over the end result.
- Cultivate a sense of purpose and keep things in perspective.
- Celebrate your growth with others and celebrate their growth as well.
- Emphasize learning well over learning quickly.
- Reward actions instead of traits.
- Give constructive criticism and accept criticism of your own work as constructive.
- Disassociate improvement from failure; “room for improvement” does not mean “failure.”
- Reflect on your learning regularly.
- Reward hard work before talent or inherent ability.
- Cultivate your grit (determination and perseverance).
- Abandon the idea of succeeding on talent alone; recognize that it will always take some work as well.
- Use the phrase “not yet” more often, as in, “I haven’t mastered it yet.”
- Make a new goal for every goal you accomplish; never stop striving toward your goals.
- Take risks and be vulnerable with others.
- Think realistically about how much time and effort your goal will take.
- Take ownership of your own attitude and take pride in your developing growth mindset.

Source: positivepsychologyprogram.com