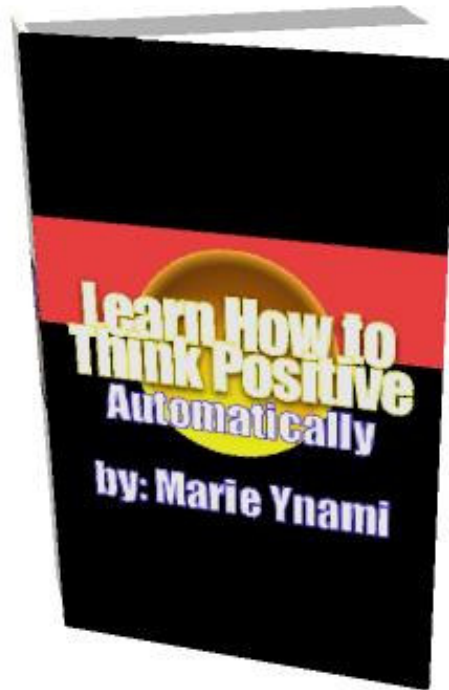


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LEARN HOW TO THINK POSITIVE, AUTOMATICALLY

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LEARN HOW TO THINK POSITIVE, AUTOMATICALLY

In order to reap the personal and professional benefits of positive thinking, you must first train your mind to think positively automatically – without you consciously having to decide to “be positive”. To do this you will need to take certain steps. First, you will need to make a conscious decision to pursue positive thinking and then commit wholeheartedly to realizing that goal. In order for positive thinking to have an impact on your life you will also need to believe in its benefits. And, since there will be setbacks throughout your journey, you will need the power of your convictions to help keep you on track.

Once you have committed to learning the skills of positive thinking, you will need to use certain exercises to teach yourself the methods and to reinforce the affirmative thoughts in your mind. The following is a list of ways to learn and practice the art of positive thinking.

Review your self-talk-

The first step to learning positive thinking skills is to review the type of thinking you are currently engaging in now. Think back to the last bad day that you had. How did you react? What types of things were you saying to yourself, both internally and out loud? What feelings did you have immediately about the situation? What feelings did you take away from the situation? How do you feel about the situation now?

The answers to the above questions will give you a pretty good idea of what type of self-talk you usually engage in. For example, did you beat yourself up about the problem? Did your mind search for ways in which the problem was ultimately your fault? Did you blame the incident on bad luck?

In order to visualize the difference between positive self-talk and negative self-talk, let's compare the two habits using the same situation. For this example, let's assume that Sally, a stay-at-home seamstress, started an Internet business to sell her handmade

handbags. Once the business began to grow, she hired another woman to sew some of the bags for her. Recently, ten of these bags were returned due to defects.

Example #1- negative self-talk: In this example, you will read some things that Sally said or thought to herself upon receiving the returned handbags.

"I should have looked the bags over more carefully, I knew I would mess this up."

"Why did I think I would ever be able to succeed in this business?"

"This is the end, now no one will want to buy these bags."

"Everyone said I couldn't make it and they were right."

"I am such an idiot, how could I make a mistake like this."

"If it wasn't for bad luck I wouldn't have any luck at all."

"Why I am so stupid?"

Example #2-positive self-talk: Here, you will read some affirmative things that Sally thought or said out loud to herself.

"Well, of course, this is a setback, but it will give me the opportunity to sharpen my customer service skills."

"While I did forget to pay attention to the details for a moment, I have learned a valuable lesson."

"Luckily, it was only ten bags and the problem was caught before it was serious."

"Every business has its pitfalls. I am going to use this one to help me do better next time."

As you can see from the examples, how we choose to see a situation can make all the difference in its outcome. When our mind talks, our attitude listens and responds. Because of this correlation, we have the power to literally "talk" ourselves into or out of success and satisfaction.

When we engage in negative self-talk we convince ourselves that our efforts are futile. This belief leads to feelings of worthlessness and failure. These feelings make it easier for us to fall victim to even more negative thoughts, which eventually snowball into feelings of despair and defeat.

However, when we engage in positive self-talk, we convince our minds and ourselves that all things are possible. By focusing on the positive we are able to believe in and realize a desirable outcome. If you truly believe that you can turn a negative situation into a positive asset then you will. Through repeated positive self-talk you will see any possible affirmative outcome as a fact of life not as an impossible dream.

To begin changing our self-talk from the negative to the positive, we must first look to the truth of the situation. When you find yourself faced with a problem, begin your thought process with a review of the facts. This initial review should not include any feelings or predictions. To help with this process, ask yourself the following questions.

1. What was the actual, physical cause of this problem? In Sally's case, the *physical* cause of the problem was not her lack of attention to detail; rather, it was a mistake in the construction of the handbag.
2. What factual events lead up to the problem? Again, using Sally's case, the actual event could have been miscommunication in the sewing instructions, a misunderstanding of the process on the part of her employee or an oversight by her employee. In any case, the event was unintentional and in no way a reflection of Sally's overall performance or business success.
3. How bad is the situation, really? While a situation may seem overwhelming at first, rational thought usually leads to the realization that the problem is not as bad as it seems. Use this question to help you brainstorm some possible outcomes, both good and bad, which could realistically stem from the problem. In Sally's case, her first thought was that everyone would stop purchasing her handbags. Rationally, however, Sally could focus on the number of currently satisfied customers, the small number of unsatisfied customers and the knowledge that she still had the opportunity to make the situation right and win over the upset customers with exceptional customer service.

Once you have determined the facts of the situation, you need to review your feelings about the situation and determine the root of those feelings. To help sort your feelings out, ask yourself the following questions.

1. What part of the situation has upset you the most? Many times, the actual problem is not the source of a person's negative feelings; instead it is how the problem makes them feel about themselves. In Sally's case, the defect in the handbags wasn't the real problem. The real problem was that the defect caused Sally's biggest fear to seem substantiated. Upon deeper examination, Sally realized that the problem with the handbags brought out her feelings of insecurity. The moment that she was made aware of the problem she began to focus on her perceived lack of business skills.
2. Are your feelings based on the reality of the situation or on how you believe the situation to be? This is an important question to ask yourself, in that it will help you differentiate between fact and fiction. Is this problem truly a representation of who you are as a person and professional? Or, are you over dramatizing the situation and placing unrealistic expectations on the subject at hand?
3. How have you handled feelings such as these in the past? In other words, are you truly reacting only to the present situation or are you falling back on old feelings and insecurities and letting these feelings cloud your judgment?
4. If this situation were happening to a colleague or friend of yours, how would you view the situation? Sometimes it helps to step away from a problem in order to view it more objectively.

Now that you have determined the reasons behind your self-talk habits, you can use that knowledge to shape new positive self-talk habits.

Practice positive self-talk-

In order to turn your thinking around, you will need to consciously practice positive thinking. An excellent tool for this is the positive thinking game. In this game you will be required to state a positive

outcome in response to a negative scenario. The following are a few examples to get you started. Each example contains a negative scenario and a possible positive response. Once you understand the technique, you will be able to create an endless supply of your own scenarios.

- The negative circumstance is that I lost the Wilbur account, however the positive circumstance is that I now have more time to devote to the Moore account.
- The negative circumstance is that my initial product is not selling very well, however the positive circumstance is that I can now devote my expertise to improving its original design.
- The negative circumstance is that sales in my field are at an all time low, however the positive circumstance is that this period will give me the motivation I need to explore other, alternative markets for my product.

Make a list of the positives in your life-

Once you are able to determine the positive in any given situation, you are ready to create a tangible reference list. Take a moment to jot down all of the positives in your life. Include such things as your health, your family, your previous education and training, any goals that you have realized, your personal and professional accomplishments, and the good points of your current business. List everything that you have to be thankful for or that you are happy about. List just as many small things as big things. You will want this list to be as complete as possible as you will be using it daily to keep your positive thinking training on track.

As the days and weeks go by, take the time to add new things to list as they happen or as they occur to you. Better yet, add to the list each night before you go to bed in order to end each day on a high note and prepare yourself to start the next day in a positive state of mind.

Make a positive to-do list-

Every morning, before you begin your day, make a positive to-do list that accentuates your goals for the day. For example, if you need to make a call to a client, do not simply write "call client" on your list. Instead, write the task in a positive manner, such as "call Mr. Williams and close the deal".

By writing out the task in an affirmative manner with a concrete positive outcome attached, your brain will be influenced to think of the task as completed and positive instead of as pending and open for failure.

You can also use the wording of each task to promote action. By being specific in your terms, you can turn a vague objective like "rework sales letter" into an action-oriented goal such as "rewrite the second paragraph of the sales letter to include two new benefits and change the deadline for membership to promote immediate ordering".

The goal of this type of to-do list is to positively influence your attitude and outlook for the day while strengthening your belief in desirable outcomes in order to keep motivation and focus high.

And, although it may seem silly, be sure to apply this same technique to your personal to-do list. Not only will this habit give you plenty of opportunities to practice your positive thinking skills, but it will also help you keep your energy and positive attitude up while you complete the necessary and sometimes mundane tasks of everyday life.

Take care of yourself both physically and mentally-

In order to retain a positive outlook in life you need to feel good about yourself, both inside and out. In order to feel good about yourself you need to take care of yourself.

To meet this goal, it is usually easier to start with the physical aspects. If you don't already exercise daily, begin now. If you often skip breakfast, begin making it an integral part of your day. If you need a haircut, get one! Every step you take to improve your life or fix your self-perceived flaws will help build your self-confidence. Then, once your self-confidence is boosted, your positive thinking skills can flourish.

For internal change, begin by looking at your attitudes about yourself. Do you feel as though you need to learn more about a certain topic, such as Internet marketing? If so, take a class or read a book about the topic. By increasing your knowledge you will decrease the severity of any insecurities that you may be harboring.

Do you have certain goals that you had planned to accomplish by this time in your life? The act of harboring unfinished business and unrealized dreams has a tendency to make us feel bad about ourselves. Start today with a small step toward your goal and commit to following through on the project. Just by beginning the process, you will immediately feel better about the situation and once you have attained the goal, your self-confidence will skyrocket.

Do you feel as though you never have enough time to accomplish your goals? Start by re-evaluating your time. First, delete time-wasting tasks from your daily schedule, and then carve out periods for finishing tasks. When rewriting your schedule, make sure to include time for relaxation and fun. Without downtime, your creative thoughts are unable to flourish.

The point of all of these exercises, both the positive thinking exercises and the self-improvement steps, is to put yourself in the correct frame of mind to accept a positive point of view. Through continued use of these exercises, you will eventually train your brain to think positively, automatically.

Use visualizations and affirmations to improve your positive thinking skills



Visualizations and affirmations are key tools in the quest for positive thinking skills. While the two exercises differ in technique, they both work to accomplish the same goal. Both exercises help to change your positive thinking goals from lofty dreams to achievable reality, however, visualizations work through imagery, while affirmations work through spoken statements.

Visualizations are key to the process of positive thinking because they offer you a way to "see" your goals as an actual outcome. This ability to see an outcome will give you control over that outcome. For instance, imagine that you are preparing to write the copy for your Internet business's home page and you are not thinking positively about your writing skills. If you just use the facts about your product or service and transfer those facts to a written page, your copy could come out sounding flat and uninspired. However, by using visualization first, you will be able to prepare not just the facts but your attitude as well. Once you can visualize yourself writing the perfect, trust inspiring, buying motivated web copy, you will be able to write that copy.

The point of visualization is to use all of your senses to "see" yourself completing any task or solving any problem in a perfectly executed manner. By imagining an event in great detail and focusing on the desired outcome, you will program your mind and body to respond as if the visualized scenario was an expected event. By repeating this visualization frequently, you will train your mind to follow a pattern that leads to the desired outcome.

Thankfully, visualization is easy to learn. Take a moment to think about something that you are currently struggling with either in business or in your personal life. Now, concentrating on that situation, use the following steps to learn and practice the skill of visualization.

1. Clear your mind of all other thoughts and distractions. This step is important because it will enable you to fully concentrate on the image and allow you to follow the imagery to the positive outcome without interruption. In the beginning, it will be easier to complete this step in a quiet environment where you can close your eyes, relax and be completely alone for several minutes.
2. Picture yourself completing the task or solving the problem in a positive way. Start at the beginning and actually envision yourself going through each step in the most positive, desirable way. Envision every detail about the situation in order to make the image seem more like fact than fantasy. Give attention to the clothes you are wearing, the people you are with, the actual words you are using and the words others are using in their responses to you.
3. Keep the outcome positive and perfect. The most important thing to remember when practicing visualization is that you must only picture the outcome in a positive way. Never picture yourself failing or even faltering. During visualization, always picture yourself performing in a perfect manner.
4. Once you have reached the end of the visualization, review it in your mind. Look for areas that you can improve upon during your next visualization session. Add details where necessary and increase positive steps where you can.
5. Repeat the visualization often. While visualization can be a key step in positive thinking, it only works well when used frequently.
6. After you have accomplished the goal or solved the problem in real life, review the actual event and use visualization to change any negative circumstances into positive ones. If any detail of the actual event did not play out perfectly, envision that detail in a way that does. This step will help prime your mind to perform in a more desirable way the next time.

Now that you know how to practice visualization, it is time to learn more about affirmations. Affirmations are spoken statements that focus on the positive achievement of a goal. Affirmations differ from positive self-talk techniques in that they concentrate on more specific

statements and are action-oriented. For example, if you are nervous about pitching a new idea to a customer your self-talk statement may be something like "I know this idea is a good one and my customer will be happy to hear about it." However, with an affirmation your statement would be more action driven, such as "Tomorrow morning I am pitching my new idea to Mr. Clark by pointing out the cost-saving benefits."

With positive self-talk you are attempting to bolster your positive attitude and belief in yourself. With affirmations you are stating a goal in a way that makes your subconscious believe that the event is already a fact. This subconscious belief is accomplished through three unique steps. First, affirmations are always spoken in first person narrative. This personalization of the fact allows the subconscious to more readily accept the statement. For example, instead of saying, "My customers are happy with my service", you would say "I know that my service/product makes my customers happy".

Second, affirmations are always stated in the present tense. By using words such as "I am" or "I know," you are tricking your mind into believing that the statement is already happening. Whereas, using statements such as "I will" or "I think," allows doubt to creep into your subconscious.

Third, affirmations are always positive in nature. For a statement to qualify as an affirmation it has to be worded without any negative language. For example, the statement "I am qualified to write excellent web copy" is an affirmation. The statement "I will try to write decent web copy" is not.

Now that you understand the nature of affirmations, you need to practice using them. First, you need to identify an upcoming goal that you would like to accomplish. Then, you need to write out that goal in simple language. Once you have a clear, concise goal statement written down, you need to transform that statement into an affirmation using the previous three steps. The following is an example of how to turn goal statements into affirmations.

Statement: "In the next few weeks, I will add another product to my internet business."

Affirmation: "In the next few weeks I am adding a terrific new product to my successful internet business."

Notice the differences in the two sentences. By changing the word *will* to the word *am*, and by adding the positive terms *terrific*, *new* and *successful* the goal statement becomes an affirmation.

If you do not have a specific goal that you are trying to accomplish, you can still use affirmations to improve your positive thinking skills. In this case, you need to choose a positive statement that is general but upbeat in nature. Some examples of these affirmations are...

"I am using my positive thinking skills to succeed in business."

"I am accomplishing great things with positive thoughts and a winning attitude."

"I am an outstanding entrepreneur."

Once you have two or three well-written affirmations completed, you can begin utilizing them on a daily basis. Just as with visualizations, affirmations work best if practiced repeatedly throughout the day. To get the most out of your affirmations it is best to repeat them at least three times a day, usually once upon waking, again in the afternoon and then, once more before bed each night.

By using your new visualization and affirmations skills frequently, you will be better able to set and reach your positive thinking goals.