

# Health tip: The Power of Positivity

## What is Positivity?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary definition, positivity is: “The practice of being or tendency to be positive or optimistic in attitude.” It is made up of three parts – positive thinking, positive emotions and positive behaviors.

Positive thinking doesn't mean that you ignore life's less pleasant situations. It just means that you approach unpleasantness in a more productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst.<sup>1</sup> Positive thinking often starts with positive self-talk.

## Some common forms of negative self-talk include:<sup>1</sup>

- **Filtering:** magnifying the negative aspects of a situation and filtering out all the positive ones
- **Personalizing:** When something bad occurs, you may automatically blame yourself
- **Catastrophizing:** You automatically anticipate the worst
- **Polarizing:** You see things only as either good or bad

**These negative thoughts may be detrimental to our mental health. Instead of looking at situations in a negative light, try altering your perspective.**

## According to the Mayo Clinic, thinking positively may result in:<sup>1</sup>

- An increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of stress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physical well-being, and better coping skills during hardships and times of stress



Be patient with yourself – turning negative thinking into positive thinking takes time and practice.

Here are some examples of negative self-talk and ways you can put positive thinking into practice:<sup>1</sup>

Negative self-talk	Positive thinking
It's too radical a change.	Let's take a chance.
I'm not going to get any better at this.	I'll give it another try.
I've never done it before.	It's an opportunity to learn something new.
It's too complicated.	I'll tackle it from a different angle.
No one bothers to communicate with me.	I may be able to open the channels of communication.

Tips to think and behave in a more positive and optimistic way: <sup>1</sup>

- Smile/Be open to humor
- Identify areas to change
- Follow a healthy lifestyle
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Check to see what you are thinking about

No reason is too small to seek help. Reasons why you may consider seeking professional support for positive thinking include:<sup>2</sup>

- Personal or familial diagnosable mental health illness
- Using alcohol or drug to feel better
- Feeling sad, feeling anxious, numb
- Relationship conflicts
- Navigating life changes: childbirth, divorce, death, work, academic transition



Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950>. 2023. Accessed July 2025.  
2. SAMHSA. <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health>. 2024. Accessed July 2025.

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