

The power of being positive



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STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS,
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FURTHER THAN THE MIRROR.”**

- FRANK SONNENBERG

From guest contributor, Frank Sonnenberg.

A positive mental attitude can improve your health, enhance your relationships, increase your chances of success, and add years to your life.

Most people are bombarded by negativity each day. Sure, it's easy to cast blame by saying you're surrounded by negative people. The reality is that a lot of the negativity is self-inflicted...influenced by the company you keep and your perspective on life.

Let's take a closer look at the negativity that we face every day:

- **Arguments.** Many arguments are the result of poor communication or the clash of opposing values and principles. People also argue to force their viewpoint on others or to just let off steam.
- **Worry.** Many people worry about losing control. They desire certainty in an uncertain world.

- **Fear.** Some folks fear the unknown. Whether their fear is real or imagined, perception is reality.
- **Blame.** When something goes wrong, people often look to cast blame on others. The result is that people usually watch out for #1 – themselves – often at the expense of those others.
- **Complaints.** Many people don't complain because they're unhappy. Compulsive complainers grumble out of boredom or a desire to turn an awkward moment of silence into a conversation starter. People also complain because it makes them feel better to vent.
- **Criticism.** There's a difference between constructive feedback and biting criticism. While constructive feedback is offered with good intent, constant and biting criticism can lead to stress, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem.
- **Mistrust.** How much time is wasted and ill will created as a result of mistrust? People spend endless hours second-guessing intent, peering over their shoulders, and creating elaborate approval processes to check and recheck.
- **Jealousy.** When is enough, enough? We live in a society where many people aren't satisfied with their own accomplishments. The grass always seems greener on the other side of the fence.
- **Gossip (our national pastime).** People gossip to fit into a group, fill a void in conversation, prove that they're in the know, take revenge on a person, put someone in their place, or merely to gain attention.

It Pays to Be Positive

A positive attitude can boost your energy, heighten your inner strength, inspire others, and garner the fortitude to meet

difficult challenges.

Here are several ways to adopt a positive attitude:

- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Spend time with people who are positive and supportive. Remember, if you get too close to a drowning victim, he may take you down with him.
- **Be positive yourself.** If you don't want to be surrounded by negative people, what makes you think others do? Learn to master your own thoughts. For example:
 - When you visualize a goal, it makes you more likely to take the actions necessary to reach it. Visualize yourself winning the race, getting the promotion, accepting the award, or landing the new account.
 - Control your negative thinking. This can be accomplished in the following ways:
 - See the glass as half full.
 - Anticipate the best outcome.
 - Don't view everything in extremes – as either fantastic or a catastrophe. This will help you reduce your highs and lows.
 - Mistakes happen. Negative people blame themselves for every bad occurrence, whether it was their fault or not. Don't let this be you.
- **Consciously resist negative thinking.** Be cognizant of and mentally avoid negative thinking. This will help you modify your behavior.
- **Be nice to yourself.** If you criticize yourself long enough, you'll start to believe it. This negativity can drag you down. It may be time to fire the critic and hire the advocate.
- **Set realistic, achievable goals.** Build confidence by

setting realistic goals and by hitting a lot of singles rather than swinging for the fences.

- **Keep it in perspective.** Life is all about prioritizing the things that matter most in your life and focusing your efforts in these areas. Don't let trivial things get you down. Learn to address or ignore small issues and move on. It's time to sweat the big stuff.
- **Turn challenges into opportunities.** Instead of letting challenges overwhelm you, turn them into opportunities. (Rather than hitting the wall, climb over it or go around.)
- **Count your blessings.** Be grateful for the special things in your life rather than taking them for granted. Some people do this by giving thanks around the dinner table, keeping a written journal, or posting one special item each day on social media. Remember, some of the greatest possessions in life are free. Take every opportunity to make a wonderful new memory.

If you want to achieve happiness, better health, stronger relationships, and continued success, you may not have to look any further than the mirror. As the saying goes, "The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have." Do you see the glass as half full or half empty? True happiness may depend on how you view the world and whom you look to for inspiration. It pays to be positive.



Frank is an award-winning author. He has written five books

and over 300 articles. Frank was recently named one of "America's Top 100 Thought Leaders" and nominated as one of "America's Most Influential Small Business Experts." Frank has served on several boards and has consulted to some of the largest and most respected companies in the world. Additionally, FrankSonnenbergOnline was named among the "Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs" and among the "Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs." Frank's new book, *Follow Your Conscience*, was released November 2014. © 2016 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved.

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