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Strategies for Enhancing a Positive Outlook

Definition:

Positive thinking and a positive outlook are practical ways to overcome many of life's difficulties, to accomplish your goals, and pursue your dreams. *Positive Thinking* may be defined as a purposeful, specific mental attitude which draws in and focuses our thoughts, words and images on good and favorable results. It is a mental attitude that fosters and expects growth, expansion and success. A positive mind anticipates happiness, joy, health and a successful outcome out of life.

Your actions and emotional condition can be greatly influenced by your expectations. Scheier and Carver (1993) suggest that people who see desired outcomes as attainable continue to strive for those outcomes, even when progress is slow or difficult. However, when the outcome seems impossible or unattainable, they stop trying and disengage themselves from their goals. This means our expectancies provide a basis for one of two types of behavior: (1) continued striving or (2) giving up. This is why focusing and holding onto positive expectancies for the future with positive thinking can help you improve your current situation. In addition, positive and negative thinking are contagious. We can influence other people with our outlook, one way or another. People will be more inclined to help us when we are positive; they will avoid us when we broadcast negativity. This happens instinctively, on a subconscious level, and can even be communicated through our body language. A French psychologist, Emile Coue (1857-1926), introduced a method of self-improvement by repeating the phrase "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better" at the beginning and at the end of every day. He called this approach 'optimistic auto-suggestion'. He believed each person had the solution to their own problem; "You have, in yourself, the instrument of your cure."

General Tips:

- 1) Always visualize only favorable and beneficial situations – ONLY.
- 2) Think of solutions, not problems.
- 3) Use positive words while thinking and talking with others. Use words such as 'I can', 'I am able', 'It is possible', etc.
- 4) Put a smile on your face, even when you don't 'feel' like it. This sends out positive energy and warmth – happiness can start with a smile.
- 5) Disregard and de-emphasize feelings of laziness, fear, worry, and thoughts of quitting
- 6) Persevere. This will transform the way your mind works.
- 7) Associate yourself with people who think positively.
- 8) Fill yourself with confidence and joy. Expect success. Say 'I can' & 'I will'.
- 9) See yourself successfully completing whatever is before you. This will yield hope, strength, and peace. Your beliefs can turn to attitudes, attitudes turn to thoughts, and thoughts to behaviors.
- 10) Expose yourself to positive things, not negative. Read books that are positive, watch movies that make you happy, etc.
- 11) Read inspiring books or quotes from people you respect or have overcome adversity everyday; many times per day if necessary.
- 12) Apply positive affirmations throughout the day, as much as necessary.
- 13) No negative thinking, no exceptions.

- 14) Find a person in history (real or fictional), a spiritual leader, someone from the bible, or a scripture which inspires you and learn more about them/it.

Inspirational & Positive Quotes:

1) Inspirational Quotes:

- a. "The positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible."
- b. "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."
- c. "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."
- d. "Fear less, hope more; Eat less, chew more; Whine less, breathe more; Talk less, say more; Love more, and all good things will be yours" Swedish Proverb
- e. "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Thomas Edison
- f. "Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm." Winston Churchill
- g. "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." Michael Jordan
- h. "People become really quite remarkable when they start thinking that they can do things. When they believe in themselves they have the first secret of success." Norman Vincent Peale
- i. "He who has a why to live can overcome almost any how." Friedrich Nietzsche
- j. "To consider is to unlock doors, To believe is to open one door, To accept is to open all doors, To surrender is to pass through"
- k. "The difference between being on an unknown journey and being lost is simply a matter of viewpoint."
- l. "When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened up for us." Helen Keller
- m. "It takes but one positive thought when given a chance to survive and thrive to overpower an entire army of negative thoughts." Robert Schuller
- n. "Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances." Thomas Jefferson
- o. "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do". Eleanor Roosevelt
- p. "Achievement seems to be connected with action. Successful men and women keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit." Conrad Hilton
- q. "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." Helen Keller
- r. "If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." Dr. Wayne Dyer
- s. "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift. That's why we call it the present." B. Olatunji
- t. "You have to 'Be' before you can 'Do' and 'Do' before you can 'Have'." Zig Ziglar
- u. "You must be the change you want to see in the world." Gandhi
- v. "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life's about creating yourself." George Bernard Shaw
- w. "Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point. Climb slowly, steadily, enjoying each passing moment; and the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey." -Harold V. Melchert

- x. Don't wish for fewer problems, wish for more skills. Don't wish for less challenges, wish for more wisdom. - Earl Shoaf
- y. "It's through falling down that we get to see things from a different level."
- z. "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the realization that there is something greater than fear." Ambrose Redmoon
- aa. "The true measure of a man is not how he behaves in moments of comfort and convenience but how he stands at times of controversy and challenges." Martin Luther King Jr.
- bb. "Would you rather tell stories of quitting after the first fall in life, or tell stories of how you kept falling but got up every time."
- cc. "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." Michael Jordan
- dd. "He who has a why to live can overcome almost any how." Friedrich Nietzsche
- ee. "In order to see the rainbow you have to first go through the storm."
- ff. "We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done."
- gg. "People become really quite remarkable when they start thinking that they can do things. When they believe in themselves they have the first secret of success." Norman Vincent Peale
- hh. "It is in dreaming the greatest dreams, seeking the highest goals that we build the brightest tomorrows. Tomorrows are only todays waiting to happen."
- ii. "Maybe good things come to those who wait, but the best things come to those who seize the moment and make it their own."
- jj. "Cherish your yesterdays, dream your tomorrows, but live your todays. Tomorrow belong to those who fully use today."
- kk. "It is always impossible until it's done." Nelson Mandela
- ll. "The grass is not greener on this side of the fence and the grass is not even greener on the other side of the fence. The grass is greener where you water it." Joel Osteen.
- mm. "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

- 2) Positive Affirmations/Positive Self-Statements: Try using positive affirmations or positive-self statements to improve your outlook. These are statements you make to yourself to help move you away from negative ways of thinking and move toward positive actions. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the affirmations, they have to be repeated with attention, conviction, interest and desire. Find a phrase important to you and repeat it as often as necessary. If you try it, and it doesn't seem to work for you, go back to reading through the inspirational quotes. Here are some examples of positive affirmations;
- a. I'm going to be o.k.
 - b. I am healthy and happy
 - c. I have a lot of energy
 - d. My mind is calm
 - e. I am calm and relaxed in every situation
 - f. My thoughts are under my control
 - g. Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better

Further Reading and References:

- 1) Scheier, M. F. & Carver, C. S. (1993). On the power of positive thinking: The benefits of being optimistic. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2, 1.
- 2) Emile Coue (1922). *Self mastery through conscious autosuggestion*.
- 3) Remez Sasson – SuccessConsciousness.com