



How powerful is positive thinking?

Sharing your most valuable asset: you!

Find — and celebrate — your creativity

e-Thoughts — *Singin' in the rain...*



Can you learn to be more positive? Yes! But it may take practice and patience. **More...**

Volunteering helps organizations...and volunteers. Volunteering adds fun and fulfillment to your everyday life. **More...**

Many people think they have to be an artist, singer, musician or writer to consider themselves creative. But that's not true. Find out how to start thinking creatively today. **More...**

How readily do we “sing in the rain” these days? How often do we try to keep an upbeat attitude and focus on solutions? **More...**

Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

How powerful is positive thinking?

March 2013 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

“Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”¹ When Abraham Lincoln said those words, he was referring to the power of positive thinking. And experts to this day agree with him.

What are the benefits of positive thinking?

Research has shown that people who have a positive outlook experience less stress, get sick less often, enjoy a sense of well-being, cope better with difficulties and have a decreased risk of coronary artery disease.

Positive people are happier, healthier and more successful

- **Positive people get more enjoyment out of life.** Positive people are outwardly focused. They radiate acceptance and warmth. Their positive vibes make them happy, which attracts people to them, which makes them even more upbeat. A very positive cycle!
- **Positive people are healthier.** No one knows exactly why. One strong theory is that they get less stressed about life’s challenges. Their bodies experience fewer of the harmful effects of stress and they stay healthier.
- **Positive people are more successful.** Optimists are more productive and often advance more quickly at their jobs. They believe in themselves, set higher goals and tend to achieve more because of their “can do” attitude.

Can you learn to be more positive? Yes!

Here’s the best news: anyone can become more positive. It starts with using more positive self-talk. Reframe your negative thoughts into positive thoughts. Here are some examples:

Negative self-talk	Positive reframe
I’ve never done this before.	Here’s a chance to learn something new.
It’s too complicated for me.	I think I can figure this out.
If I ask for help I’ll look stupid.	I’ll brainstorm with others if I need to.
I’m not getting any better at this.	I’m going to give it another chance.

Becoming more positive takes practice and patience

It won’t happen overnight. But with practice, you can learn to give yourself kinder messages and be more self-accepting. In time, you may find this strategy flows over into your being less critical of others. That will draw others to you rather than push them away. And in the end: the more positive you become, the happier and healthier you can be.

¹www.advancedlifeskills.com

Sharing your most valuable asset: you!

March 2013 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

These days, many people feel they have little or no time to volunteer. Yet it's also a time when volunteering is more important than ever. With so many financial cutbacks, service organizations are relying heavily on volunteerism.

Volunteering helps organizations...and volunteers

Sure, volunteering helps organizations. But it also helps you, the volunteer. It adds variety to your life. It stimulates different parts of your physical, emotional and mental self that you might not use at other times.

Volunteering helps you find new interests, build self-confidence, learn new skills and make new friends. It adds fun and fulfillment to your everyday life. It can even help you advance your career.

The key: finding the right “match”

The key is to find the right fit. If you're going to spend time and energy on something outside your family and job, you want to feel it's worthwhile. Here are some tips on finding a good match:

- **Start by feeling, not thinking.** Your heart often tells you more about what you want to do than your mind.
- **Consider your preferences.** Do you like to work alone or on a team? Do you prefer to be indoors or outdoors? Do you like to work with children, adults or elders? Would you like to work from home to cut down on travel time and expense?

Do you want to try something totally new or do you want to start by using your current skills?

- **Shop around.** As a volunteer, you don't need to settle. If you volunteer for something and it's not what you'd hoped, try something else.
- **Go with your gut.** You're devoting your time and effort so make sure you feel good about what you're being asked to do. What keeps volunteers interested and motivated? The feeling that they're making a difference, connecting with others and having a positive experience.
- **Concerned about losing family time?** Consider including family members in a volunteer project you can all do together. It's not easy to juggle everyone's schedule to make it happen. But it can pay off in terms of sharing time and experiences on a meaningful project.

Where can you look for opportunities?

Here's a short list of places to start your search:

- Museums or community theaters
- Hospitals, nursing homes or rehab centers
- Libraries or senior centers
- Service organizations like the Red Cross, Rotary or Lions Club
- Youth groups, sports teams and after-school programs
- Historic landmarks and national parks
- Places of worship
- Online databases

Find — and celebrate — your creativity

March 2013 Newsletter



[Return to index page](#)

Many people think they have to be an artist, singer, musician or writer to consider themselves creative. But that's not true. Some of the most creative pursuits in life include being a customer service agent, scientist, engineer, mathematician and teacher. And parenting is probably the most creative job of all!

Creativity is thinking and acting “out of the box”

Creativity is not about your job description. It's about how you see the task in front of you and what you do to get it done. Creative solutions are everywhere, just waiting to be tapped.

Start thinking creatively today

Creative thinking is a process of freeing yourself from old patterns. It's positive and energizing. Here are some tips for helping yourself think more creatively:

- **Ask questions.** Never underestimate the power of asking “why,” “what” or “how.” Asking is the only way to learn, clarify and fully understand the details of an assignment, challenge or task.
- **Be curious.** Find out how similar tasks have been handled in the past. Prior solutions may just need to be tweaked or brought up to date with some new, creative input.
- **Be willing to be unique.** Creative problem-solvers stand out in a crowd because they aren't afraid to be different. Try brainstorming or letting your imagination run free to create new possibilities.

- **Be brave enough to fail.** Many creative icons are no strangers to failure. Thomas Edison tested over 1,000 materials as filament for the light bulb before finding the right one. When asked about all those “failures,” he said that each attempt taught him something new and moved him one step closer to the answer. So he didn't consider a single attempt a failure.
- **Try working backward!** Here's a fresh, new way to look at things: When faced with a problem or challenge, start with a mental picture of what the problem will look like when it's solved. Then think backward to each step that will be needed to achieve the step before it. This approach is creative and it works!

Each of us has creative abilities. Set yours free by leaving your usual ways of thinking and trying out some new techniques. And prepare to be amazed at what you find!

e-Thoughts - *Singin' in the rain...*

March 2013 Newsletter



Return to index page

Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

Actor Gene Kelly made a lasting impression in the movie ***Singin' in the Rain*** when he did his now famous song and dance in the middle of a rainstorm. Using fancy footwork to tap through puddles and downpour, he couldn't have been more joyous, even though he was soaked to the skin.

Aside from the pure childlike fun of playing in the rain, is there a message in this scene? Could it be that singing in the rain is really about the strength of the human spirit?

It got me to thinking: How readily do we “sing in the rain” these days? When things go wrong, do we fume and complain? How often do we try to keep an upbeat attitude and focus on solutions?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying we should all grab our umbrellas and tap shoes and head out into rainstorms. But how about trying to see setbacks as temporary? Problems as challenges to overcome? Lemons as ingredients for lemonade?

To see Gene Kelly's famous scene, go to Youtube or any search engine. Simply enter “***Singin' in the Rain.***”¹ Sit back and enjoy!

¹<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmCpOKtN8ME>

Quality time – Celebrating life

Monthly Newsletter March 2013

[Return to index page](#)

This material is for informational purposes only. All calls are confidential, except as required by law (i.e., when a person's emotional condition is a threat to himself/herself or others, or there is suspected child, spousal or elder abuse, or abuse to people with disabilities). Services are available to you and your household members, including dependent children up to age 26, whether they live at home or not.

Information is believed to be accurate as of the production date; however, it is subject to change.