



# The plus side of positivity

*A positive outlook can be good for your health*

Positive thinking can be a choice. Is the glass half-full, or half-empty? The truth depends on your outlook. Even when things seem grim, you can practice positive thinking and action. Doing so can boost your overall health by helping you:

- Keep a healthier mind and body.
- Cope with stress.
- Build trust and compassion.
- Become a happier person.
- Enjoy more hopeful living.
- Live longer.

## How powerful is optimism to your health?

An eight-year study of women found that those with a more positive disposition were significantly less likely to die prematurely from major illnesses. How? Researchers found that not only did optimism tend to promote healthier choices that encourage longer life; they believe it also affects different systems in the body. The study results showed that the most positive women were:

- Over 50% less likely to die from infection.
- Nearly 40% less likely to die from heart disease, stroke and respiratory illness.
- Almost 20% less likely to die from cancer.



Another study showed that pessimistic men were twice as likely to develop heart disease than their more cheerful counterparts. And, generally, individuals who tend to see blue skies instead of gray may also:

- Recover faster from surgery.
- Reduce the levels of cortisol (stress hormone) and adrenaline.
- Lower their risk of high blood pressure.
- Strengthen their immune system.
- Protect blood circulation and lessen the risk of blood clots.
- Experience better physical and mental functioning overall.

## Take a walk on the bright side

Try these activities to help you practice positive thinking once a day or as often as you want. Then, see what it does for your well-being:

### Ask

- Do I tend to see what's right instead of what's wrong in my life or the world?
- Am I waiting around for good things to happen to me?
- Do I put myself down easily instead of being glad about what I'm able to do?
- Do I believe I have a bright future ahead of me?

### Think

- Think about the different areas of your life and what's good about them.

Or

- Think about your life in the future when you've reached all your biggest goals. What does that future life look like to you?

### References:

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## Positive vs. Happy

Being positive doesn't mean every day is going to be sunny and perfect. For instance, you can have health, money or relationship problems, but still be optimistic about bettering your situation. And being happy doesn't necessarily mean someone is always positive. A pessimist can feel overjoyed at winning the lottery, but still feel like everyone will try to take his or her money.

Positivity comes from your mindset. It's what you think, feel, do and say that helps you function and thrive. Positive thinkers learn ways to work around hard times and get what they need for the life they want.

### Write

1. Write the things you like about yourself and/or what you're good at.
2. Write at least one of your most important goals that will help you live your best future.
3. Write how you will reach that goal.

### I like that I ...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Positive thought about yourself/abilities)

### I want to ...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ one day.

(Goal)

### To get what I want, I will ...

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Action)