Life is what you make it

A little boy called Andy was asked to audition with his classmates for a part in the school play. His mother knew that he had his heart set on being in the play and she was worried about how he would react if he wasn’t chosen.

On the day that the parts were given out, Andy’s mother went to the school to collect him feeling anxious about the outcome.

Seeing his mother Andy rushed up to her, his eyes were shining with pride and excitement.

"Guess what Mum," he shouted, and then said the words that can provide a lesson to us all, "I've been chosen to clap and cheer."

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Understanding and knowing that you are so much more in control of your lives than you sometimes believe is not only reassuring, it is empowering. The way that you think determines the way that you feel and is the control pad for the volume of happiness that you can experience. The quality of your thinking essentially determines the quality of your life. Think about this ....

Did you know that you have 60 - 80,000 thoughts a day ?

Yesterday I had a thought.

That thought became an emotion

That emotion turned into words, the words fuelled action,

The actions became a habit. My habits are my Character,

My Character defines my destiny.

Today, therefore,

I’ll think about my thoughts a little more.
The power of positive thinking

Thinking positively is not about putting your head in the sand, nor is it about being unrealistic. By developing a positive attitude you still recognise the negative aspects of a situation, however you choose to focus on the hope and opportunity that is available. This approach helps you to avoid getting locked into a paralysing loop of bad feeling and allows you to move on quickly and take action to solve problems and embrace life’s challenges of which we inevitably experience. This quote says it all!

"Whether you are an optimist or a pessimist might not affect the outcome, it’s just that the optimist has a better time in life!"

*James Borg – Mindpower*

The term “PMA” is all about having a positive mental attitude. Many books about personal success or self-improvement start with a sharp focus on cultivating energy, enthusiasm and optimism in all areas of your life. Developing a positive attitude is the key to health and happiness.

Sustaining a positive attitude

Creating and maintaining a positive attitude is the most efficient and low-cost investment you can make in order to improve your life. A positive way of thinking is a habit and needs to be learned through repetition and conscious effort on your part.

Positive affirmations to condition your mind can be very useful. Saying things to yourself like: *I am an optimistic, hopeful, positive thinking person. Yes I accept that bad things can happen in my life, however I choose to look for positive opportunities and outcomes in every situation.*

A positive attitude is not dependent upon your genetic composition even if you are pre-disposed to negative thinking you can learn to move your thinking to the positive side. This depends entirely upon you and how you choose to think.
How to be more positive about your life

Avoid negative attitude germs

Let me ask you a question. If you had a really bad cold or flu would you walk over to someone and sneeze in their face? Hopefully not!

So let me ask you another question. Have you ever had a bad day when someone or something has annoyed or upset you and you have felt the need to get it off your chest and have a good old moan to someone about it? I am sure that we have all been guilty of that from time to time.

You are, in effect, spreading your NAGs – Negative Attitude Germs.

You may have noticed that when you are with someone who is suffering from a physical or emotional problem, you feel bad too. It’s often described as catching their emotion. Researchers have observed this actually happening in real time in the brain, using an advanced MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) machine. It shows the brain of Person A reflects activity in the same area as Person B when they are in close proximity.

The scientific term for this is neural mirroring. This does, therefore, point out the danger of hanging around negative, pessimistic people if you prefer to be positive and optimistic.

Choose to be a radiator

Some people you meet are like drains: negative, listless doom goblins and when we come into contact with them they drain us of energy.

They like to tell you about all their negative news and prefer to play the victim, wallowing in the “poor me” mentality. These are the people who when you ask
them how they are they will respond with their shoulders slumped, eyelids drooped “Well you know ... I feel really ... bad!” and then they will give you a graphic blow by blow account of all their woes and feelings of impending doom! You may well know people like this. Perhaps it is a behaviour you indulge in? Perhaps we all do from time to time however does it really do us any favours?

Other people, however, are like radiators - full of warmth and vitality. We feel positively energised by them. They appear bright and radiant, look you in the eye and when you ask them how they are, they smile and tell you something positive.

It is amazing how some people are so intent on being negative. I wonder whether they get up some days and plan to go into work to “drain the radiators”! You may well know people like this. It might even be a behaviour that you indulge in yourself. If so, next time you find yourself doing this ask yourself how you will positively benefit from actively choosing this mind set.

Take personal responsibility

The antidote for negativity is that you learn to accept responsibility for your situation. The very act of taking responsibility cancels out any negative emotion that you may trigger. By embracing responsibility you will reap many rewards. The successes brought by this attitude acts as a foundation for self-respect, pride and confidence. Responsibility breeds competence and personal power. By living up to your promises and obligations, you will win the trust of others. Once you are seen as trustworthy, people will willingly work with you and want to be with you. Making excuses can put the brakes on our progress, while accepting responsibility can lead us more towards succeed.

It can be easy to blame others or circumstances for everything in our lives – past, present or future. It lets us off the hook to some degree. However, ultimately it doesn’t help us because we become a prisoner of circumstance and allow everything and everyone around us to dictate our world.
Positively learn from mistakes

Making mistakes is human and we can’t get everything right all the time. To increase your rate of success you will have to be willing to accept that you will make mistakes along the way, the skill is that you positively learn from them. Certainly some of the best learning and character building experiences I have been through are on the back of mistakes.

Mistakes are the portals of discovery

James Joyce

Putting your hand in the air and saying “yes I recognise I made a mistake or I am responsible for that and this is what I am going to do to improve the situation” is actually quite liberating.

For example admitting when we get something wrong and saying I’m sorry can relieve a great deal of tension in any relationship. Humble pie can actually taste quite nice! It isn’t poisonous. It is a real skill to be brave enough to admit when you don’t get something right and have the humility to accept it, admit and then positively move on.

Just because you mistakes it doesn’t make you a lesser person or inferior to others. Also if you never make mistakes, how do you learn?

No-one can make you feel inferior without your consent

Eleanor Roosevelt
Life can be an interesting and challenging journey and granted you may well get a little travel sick along the way and you may even hit a few pot holes. However, by developing a positive attitude you will be much better equipped to be able to deal with everything so much better. It takes practise and certainly there will be days when you really struggle to see the sun for the clouds. You may even decide you want to wallow a little and that is ok. The question though, is for how long?

Life is what you make it and what makes your life worth living is your own personal voyage of discovery. We are all people in progress with so much undiscovered potential. How exciting and wonderful is that?

**Life is what you make it - Top Tips**

- The first step to happiness is to make a conscious decision to be happy
- Choose to be an optimist not a pessimist
- Actively seek out opportunities instead of problems
- Think more consciously about what you think about
- Address any negative attitude germs that you may be spreading
- Choose to be a radiator not a drain
- Avoid blaming other people
- Learn from your mistakes and positively move on
- Take personal responsibility for all your actions
- Remember this is your life and your life is what you make it
About the author

Liggy Webb is widely respected as a leading expert in the field of Modern Life Skills. As a presenter, consultant and author she is passionate about her work and helping to improve the quality of people’s lives.

Her new book How to be Happy (Published by Capstone) is due out in August 2012. It will be available on Amazon and in all book stores.

Email info@liggywebb.com to order a first edition signed copy. This makes an ideal gift and can be gift wrapped if requested at no extra charge.

Liggy Webb explains how we can achieve a happier and more positive life and backs up her theory with some great evidence and advice.

Paul O’Neill, Vice President, Guinness World Records Commercial

This is a life enhancing book that will undoubtedly bring greater and longer lasting happiness to every reader’

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