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The Power of Positive Thinking

It's likely our species survived because of our knack for detecting danger. But our worry-filled thoughts can present dangers of their own: Thinking negatively can drag down our moods, our actions and even our health. Experts say it's worthwhile - and possible - to learn to think more positively.



Benefits of staying positive according to research:

- People who were optimistic had a nearly 20 percent lower risk of dying over a 30-year period than those who were pessimistic
- People who kept track of their gratitude once a week were more upbeat and had fewer physical complaints than others
- People who repeated positive thoughts and behaviors were able to change their unhealthy patterns—and their brain activity actually changed too

Ways to stay positive:

Foster Optimism - Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible—and it gets easier with practice.

- **Write about a positive future.** The idea is to envision your goals and dreams come true.
- **Search for the silver lining.** Looking for the positive in a negative situation may sound sappy, but it can actually show great strength.

Practice Gratitude - Noticing and appreciating the positives in our lives offers a great mood boost.

- **Keep a gratitude journal.** Write down anything large or small that makes you smile, including terrific achievements, touching moments and great relationships.
- **Share your good news.** Studies of people's reactions to positive developments suggest that those who tell a friend about a happy event enjoy it even more.

Avoid Negative Thinking - If you want to feel positive, it pays to decrease the downers in your life. With practice, you can resist worrisome thoughts and perhaps even transform your internal critic into more of a cheering squad.

- **Change unhealthy self-talk.** You may have been running negative messages in your head for a long time. But research shows that you can learn to shift your thoughts and that, over time, you can literally change your brain.
- **Imagine what you'd tell a friend** if he/she was worrying in ways that you are. You'd likely convince him/her to wait a bit before assuming the worst.
- **Consider alternative explanations.** If your boss hasn't responded to your proposal it could be that he/she is busy and not because he/she doesn't like it. Modified from: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/stay-positive>

HOW TO USE YOUR EAP:

ERC is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). For additional information, visit our website

www.ERCincorp.com or simply call 1-800-222-8590.