



POSITIVITY BOOST

Mindset

The happiest and most positive people have a mindset that focuses on constructive possibilities rather than on destructive problems.

KEYS TO A POSITIVE MINDSET:

- Overcome the negativity bias by focusing on the positive.
- Search for gold.
- Have conscious experiences.
- Change the shape of your mental ice cube.

A POSITIVE MINDSET LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD

Have you ever noticed how even on a great day even just one negative experience can ruin the entire day, as you ruminate over the negative experience?

This is because humans are biologically wired by default with a negativity bias. Think about it: if our ancestors didn't focus on threats then they'd likely starve to death or get eaten by a tiger! The problem is that we have an ancient brain interpreting a modern world, so by cultivating a positive mindset, what we're doing is simply leveling the playing field.

SEARCH FOR GOLD

When you mine for gold you have to sift through tons of dirt to find just an ounce of gold. The secret is to go in not looking for dirt, but for gold. The same is true for our everyday life. The problem isn't the presence of dirt, but that we focus too much on the dirt and therefore fail to notice the gold in our lives.

POSITIVE WORDS

Fascination, Inspiration, Motivation, Positivity, Joy, Kindness, Empathy, Confidence. These are words that if focused on we could facilitate positive experiences for ourselves and the people we influence. Below is a word search, and your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to find these eight positive words in thirty seconds or less. Are you up to the challenge? After thirty seconds, move on to the next page even if you don't find all eight words.

I	A	K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S	E	R	R	S	K	P	N	E
N	L	L	G	W	V	F	M	O	T	I	V	A	T	I	O	N	M
S	F	A	S	C	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	G	R	E	E	D	P
P	L	D	P	O	S	I	T	I	V	I	T	Y	J	I	S	Q	A
I	M	D	E	S	P	A	I	R	J	X	Q	L	I	E	S	H	T
R	N	E	G	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	J	K	C	A	B	P	H
A	K	K	I	P	S	C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	C	E	O	Y
T	A	C	C	E	P	T	A	N	C	E	J	X	Q	J	L	T	J
I	D	I	S	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	D	G	O
O	H	B	E	F	B	F	R	U	S	T	R	A	T	I	O	N	Y
N	P	Y	W	C	O	N	F	U	S	I	O	N	M	W	V	M	X
W	Q	A	R	R	O	G	A	N	C	E	U	C	D	R	L	O	N

How many of the positive words did you find? Did you find all eight? Maybe five? Or at least two or three? However many you found, high five! But the question real this: did you find any words in the puzzle that weren't on the list?

The secret of this puzzle is that there are more than just those eight words hidden in this puzzle. Just like in the real world, there are both positive and negative influences. This puzzle contains an equal number of positive words that can build us up as negative words that can tear us down, but you likely found more positive words because that's what you went in looking for. Whether we seek to foster a positive mindset or fester in a negative mindset, they are equally self-fulfilling prophecies, because we'll find whatever we are consciously looking for.

CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCES

How we respond to our circumstances can have a significant impact on our lives by literally changing the neural networks in our brain. Think of it this way:

Our brain is kind of like a spotlight attached to a vacuum cleaner. What we give attention to is highlighted by the spotlight and because it's attached to a vacuum cleaner it also gets suck right up into our brain—for better or worse. Therefore, what we choose to focus on has the power to change our experience.

And so, when we cultivate conscious experiences by carefully choosing what we focus on, we empower ourselves with a rewired brain that can better respond to our circumstances. The question becomes, what are you choosing to focus on?

CHANGE THE SHAPE OF YOUR “MENTAL” ICE CUBE

How do we change the shape of an ice cube? First have to melt the ice, then decide on the new shape, and lastly refreeze the water in that new shape.

Changing our perspective is the same kind of process. First we have to let our natural negativity bias melt away, then decide on a new more positive mindset, and

lastly practice that new mindset every day until it freezes into a new more fascinating mindset and lifestyle.

To help you in this process, here are seven positivity practices that you can try:

PRACTICE #1

Be Aware of When You're Frustrated

What circumstances cause you frustration? Being aware of these negative influences can help you to see possible threats ahead and prepare for them ahead of time. You might want to write these frustrations down in a journal along with possible tactics to respond to them the next time you experience them.

PRACTICE #2

Be Mindful of Your Thoughts

Challenge your assumptions and change your narrative. We are who we perceive ourselves to be, and so by mindfully choosing what we focus on we can apply a more constructive perspective to frame our world and reflect on our learning experiences and abilities.

PRACTICE #3

Choose Fascination

Stay curious, ask questions, and challenge assumptions. For example, instead of asking, "*Why did this have to happen?*" ask instead, "*How can this to make my life and my world better?*"

PRACTICE #4

Change the Channel

When you start to feel frustrated, simply "change the channel." Go for a walk, watch a movie, read a book, grab a cup of coffee, go to the bathroom, take a shower, talk with a friend, or chew it over with Twix. The idea is to find a way to temporarily step aside from the situation to breathe so that you can come back with a fresh perspective.

PRACTICE #5***Focus on What You Can Control***

Focus your energy on what can be controlled and simply let go of the rest. This is easier said than done, but with practice it becomes easier. When making those kinds of decisions what you're doing is putting your "CEO" hat on and making decisions like a boss.

PRACTICE #6***Get Physical Exercise***

Exercise releases neurotransmitters in the brain that positively affects how we feel. Chemicals that have been associated with positive moods include dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin. Find yourself getting frustrated? Get some cardio in. Know you'll be facing a trigger? Go to the gym first. By scheduling challenges immediately following physical activity you can help channel your positive brain chemistry toward addressing the challenges.

PRACTICE #7***Activate You Parasympathetic Nervous System***

The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems act like the accelerator and brakes on a car. The sympathetic system is the accelerator, always ready to rev up and take on a challenge. The parasympathetic system is the brakes, slowing us down when challenges aren't present. You can learn to trigger your parasympathetic nervous system to immediately reduce anxiety and stress to lift your mood. Here are some tips backed by science:

- Focus on a word that is soothing such as calm or peace.
- Recite a repetitive mantra or prayer.
- Gently Touch Your Lips. Your lips have parasympathetic fibers spread throughout them, so touching them activates the parasympathetic nervous system. To do this, simply take one or two fingers and gently run them over your lips. (Or find someone to make out with)
- Do some simple breathing exercises. When you inhale, fill your lungs fully, hold for a second or so, and then exhale in a relaxed way. Do this for one minute. These long inhalations expand the bronchioles, and the constricting

of the bronchioles is regulated by the parasympathetic nervous system, thus triggering the parasympathetic to bring them back to their “resting” size, thereby bringing you to a state of calm to reduce potential stress...just like magic!

FINAL THOUGHT

In life there are two types of people: Treasure Hunters and the Trash Collectors.

Treasure Hunters spend their days looking for what is positive, useful, and constructive. They focus their energy, time, and thoughts on it, and for them each moment is treasured like a shining jewel that they store in their treasure chest forever.

On the other hand, Trash Collectors spend their days looking for what is negative, wrong, and destructive. They focus their energy, time, and thoughts on the trash, and every day they put that trash into a big trashcan.

The treasure hunters proudly carry their treasure into the future, while the trash collectors drag their heavy, smelly trashcan from one day to the next. The question is: At the end of the day, which one would you rather be? The one who has a treasure chest filled with useful, positive memories? Or the one who has a trashcan filled with things they don't like? The choice is yours.



If you are the people you influence are ready to foster a positive mindset, then the important thing to remember is to simply start:

***Start with where you are, start with just one thing,
and start making positive changes.***

REFLECTION

- 1. In what area of your life do you notice the negativity bias taking over your decision-making?*
- 2. How might your life be different if you searched for gold rather than dirt?*
- 3. How can you cultivate conscious experiences that build you up?*
- 4. What practices will you engage in to change the shape of your mental ice cube? How will you employ them?*

KEY INSIGHTS

DATE: _____

..... **MY NEXT STEPS**

PRIORITY	ACTION	COMPLETED	RESULT
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

What mindset will you use to stay Engaged?

What talents, skills, knowledge, information, or interests do you need to stay Empowered?

What reminders will you use to stay Encouraged?

How will you experience more Enjoyment?

How are you preparing yourself to achieve Excellence?

YOUR FACILITATOR



Jonas Cain is Positivity Consultant, Learning Experience Designer, and Facilitator of Fascination, helping emerging leaders and their influencers gain clarity, confidence, courage, and joy in their life, work, and relationships.

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