

The Power of Positive Thinking: A Practical Guide to Mastering the Problems of Everyday Living is a 1952 book by Norman Vincent Peale. The book uses positive case stories and practical self-help advice to demonstrate the advantages of positive thinking.

A 3 Minute Summary of the 15 Core Lessons

#1 Have Faith in Yourself

First and foremost, Peale states that having faith in yourself is the most important aspect when it comes to having a happy and successful life. Faith in yourself is intrinsically tied to self-confidence, which helps you achieve greater goals. If you don't already have faith in yourself, your primary goal should be building up your self-confidence before anything else.

#2 A Peaceful Mind is Key

Peale asserts that living with excessive anxiety and stress is extremely difficult. If you want to make it through your everyday life and pursue greater goals, you must learn to cultivate a peaceful mind. You'll need to learn to focus on attitudes that provide serenity and peace. Whether this involves silent meditation or using peaceful words, you must achieve a peaceful mind.

#3 Don't "Fret"

Peale says that many people have difficulty relaxing and instead "fume and fret". This causes them to focus excessively on their work-life stresses or on minor issues that crop up every day. You need to learn to reduce tension in your life by slowing down and controlling your physical reactions. Don't allow the small issues of every day to affect you in the long term.

#4 Break the Worrying Habit

Many people spend far too much time worrying, especially about things they can't control. But spending too much time worrying can shorten your life span or cause other health issues. It's a terrible habit and one that you need to break. There are three steps to breaking a bad worrying habit.

#5 Believe You Can

The first step to breaking a worrying habit is related to building up your self-confidence. Whatever you do, whether it's a short-term goal or a massive undertaking, you must believe that success is possible. Peale himself uses faith in God as an inspirational cornerstone, but you can derive this belief from any source.

#6 Empty the Mind

The second step is to empty your mind. This doesn't mean you should not think about anything, but instead suggests that you should take a period of peaceful meditation for self-reflection every day. Focus on emptying your brain from the myriad thoughts that run around constantly, causing you to worry. Emptying your mind is necessary for the third step.

#7 Refill Your Mind

To fully stop yourself from worrying, focus on filling your mind with positive thoughts to take up the space that your worries previously did. The brain has a habit of filling itself with random junk if you don't purposefully fill it with positive thoughts. Courage, hope, and faith are all strong ideas that can bring great advantages if you learn to draw them in regularly.

#8 Use the Power of Prayer

Peale is an unapologetically religious man, and he claims the power of prayer can be a great force. Prayer can restore physical health and well-being and can tap into strength or forces that are not normally available. You can use prayer to supplement your own motivation or energy levels, or to help you get out of a negative worrying rut.

#9 Increase Your Energy

Whatever you plan to do with your life, it's necessary that you boost your internal energy to enjoy your day and reach your goals. Your thoughts have a huge impact on your physical energy levels. To that end, you need to increase the positive energy of your thoughts in order to helpfully boost the energy levels of your body.

#10 Dispose of Guilt and Fear

Both of these negative emotions during the body of energy and make it much more difficult to get through each day. These are completely useless emotions, so you must focus on replacing them with positive counterparts. You can alternatively use faith or prayer to receive the power and energy you need to withstand their effects.

#11 Choose to be Happy

This sounds easier than it is. But the truth is that we can choose to be happy, particularly if we train our brains to accept this new condition over time. When you are just starting out, it'll be difficult to convince your mind to be happy if it wants to be miserable. But over time, it will get with the program.

#12 Expect the Best

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't plan for negative outcomes. But the mind ends up seeing what it expects. So those who focus on negative outcomes will be more likely to see the bad side of things than those who expect positive results. It's a good idea to train your mind to expect the best even while preparing for possible contingencies.

#13 Keep Yourself Busy

It's a good idea to keep yourself busy, especially if you find yourself falling into a negative thought cycle. Keeping yourself busy is a good way to trick your brain into focusing on different things, and it may accidentally forget to worry. Doing something you are passionate about or care deeply for are both excellent substitutions for ruminating. You can alternatively do something positive for others.

#14 Pray Practically

Peale suggests "praying practically", which involves picturizing what you want to see.

Then you must “prayerize” it, by praising what you want into a prayer format. This helps with visualization even further. Finally, take steps to achieve that goal and you’ll find that the prayer, at the bare minimum, gave you the energy needed to complete your tasks.

#15 Imagine God as a Partner

It often helps many to imagine the Creator as their partner. If you talk to God as a friend, you can know that He hears you and is thinking about your issues just as you are. This helps your mind to form a real connection with God and take further benefits from prayer.

Top 10 Quotes from The Power of Positive Thinking

1. “The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.”
2. “Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy.”
3. “Our happiness depends on the habit of mind we cultivate.”
4. “When you expect the best, you release a magnetic force in your mind which by a law of attraction tends to bring the best to you.”
5. “To become a happy person have a clean soul, eyes that see romance in the commonplace, a child’s heart, and spiritual simplicity.”
6. “It is significant that the word “holiness” derives from a word meaning “wholeness” and the word “meditation,” usually used in a religious sense, closely resembles the root meaning of the word “medication.” The affinity of the two words is startlingly evident when we realize that sincere and practical meditation upon God and His truth acts as a medication for the soul and body.”
7. “We are beginning to comprehend a basic truth hitherto neglected, that our physical condition is determined very largely by our emotional condition, and our emotional life is profoundly regulated by our thought life.”
8. “When the old fears, hates, and worries that have haunted you for so long try to edge back in, they will in effect find a sign on the door of your mind reading “occupied.”
9. “The greatest secret for eliminating the inferiority complex, which is another term for deep and profound self-doubt, is to fill your mind to overflowing with faith. Develop a tremendous faith in God and that will give you a humble yet soundly realistic faith in yourself.”
10. “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ... nothing shall be impossible unto you.”