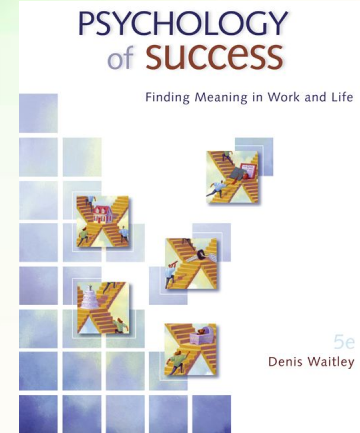


Positive Thinking

Chapter 5

“Hope is not a dream, but a way of making dreams become reality.”

Leo Suenens, Religious Leader



Learning Objectives

- Define positive thinking and cite its benefits.
- List six habits that can help you become a more positive thinker.
- Explain the link between positive thinking and good health.
- Describe how self-defeating attitudes create a vicious cycle.
- Define cognitive distortions and irrational beliefs and give an example of each.
- Summarize the ABCDE method for overcoming irrational beliefs.

Becoming A Positive Thinker

- **Positive Thinking** Focusing on what is good about yourself, other people, and the world around you.
- **Optimism** The tendency to expect the best possible outcome.
- **Attitude** A belief or opinion that predisposes you to act in a certain way.

Success Secret

- *Positive thoughts lead to positive feelings and actions.*

The Power of Positive Thoughts

FIGURE 5.1 The Power of Positive Thoughts



On Target Thoughts, feelings, and actions go hand in hand. When you have positive thoughts, you experience positive feelings and have the energy and drive to take positive actions. *Do you believe that you can change your way of thinking by choosing to do so? Why or why not?*

Negative Thinking And Pessimism

- **Negative Thinking** Focusing on the flaws and problems in yourself, other people, and the world around you.
- **Pessimism** The tendency to expect the worst possible outcome.

Success Secret

- *Negative thinking blocks you from taking risks, making changes and expressing your real self.*

Activity 24: Are You A Positive Thinker?

Adopting Positive Habits

- **Look For The Good!**
Personal Journal 5.1 Focusing on the Good.
- **Choose Your Words**
Make a habit of speaking positively to people.
- **Surround Yourself With Positive People**
Seek the company of positive people who share ideas.
- **Accept, Don't Judge**
Strive to accept people as they are.
- **Limit Complaints**
Instead of complaining, take constructive action.

Adopting Positive Habits continued...

- **Don't Worry** *Worry is a major barrier to positive thinking, and frequent worry harms your health.*

Myth: “Worrying helps me prepare for action.”

Reality: Worrying drains your energy.

Myth: “Worrying helps me deal with my problems.”

Reality: Worrying is a substitute for dealing with your problems.

Myth: “Worrying means I care.”

Reality: Caring and worrying are not the same.

When Faced With Worry, Strategize...

- Focus on solutions, not worst-case scenarios.
- Cope, don't avoid. Take action!
- Share your worries. Talk with a friend.
- If you really can't do anything about the situation, try to let the worry go.
- Drown out the worry with positive affirmations.
- Channel your nervous energy into physical activity.

Activity 25: Banishing Worry

Your Thinking Style And Your Health

- **Positive Thinking** can make us mentally and physically healthy.
- **Negative Thinking** can delay healing and cause us to neglect our health.
- **Depression** An illness characterized by profound feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness.

Success Secret

- *Thinking well can make you well.*

Personal Journal 5.2 Depression Self-Check

Getting Healthy

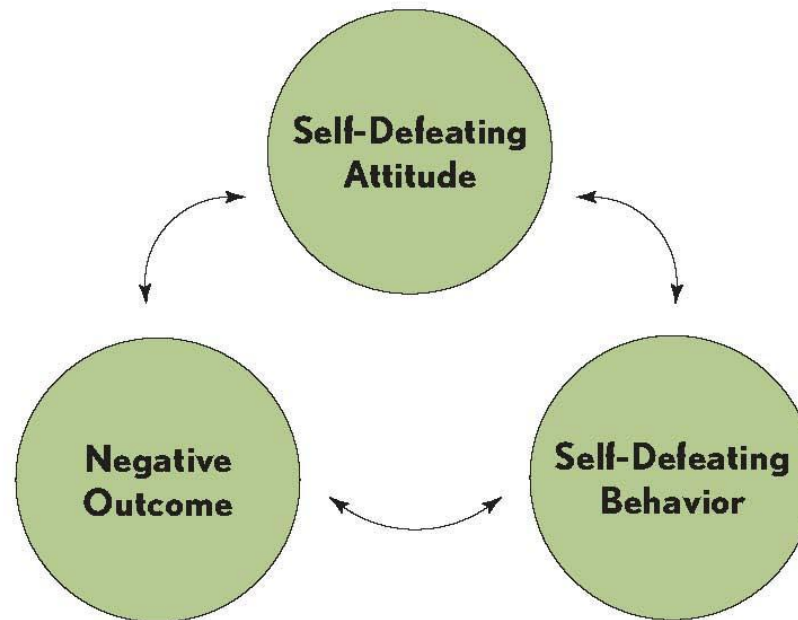
- **Eat Right** Use the free www.mypyramid.gov plan.
 - Don't eat for emotional reasons.
 - Learn to read and understand nutrition labels
 - Shop with a list—you'll buy more nutritious foods.
 - Try a variety of foods to make it easier to eat healthy.
- **Get Moving**
 - Try to be physically active for at least 20 minutes each day.
 - Vary your activities so you don't get bored.
 - Motivate yourself by learning about health and fitness.
 - Set SMART exercise goals for yourself. If you get off track, just start again.

Activity 26: What's Your Health Attitude?

Conquering Negative Thoughts

Self-Defeating Attitudes: A Vicious Cycle

FIGURE 5.2 Self-Defeating Attitudes: A Vicious Cycle



Stop the Cycle When we have negative attitudes, we tend to act in ways that make our negative predictions about events come true. *How can you break this vicious cycle?*

Activity 27: Challenging Self-Defeating Attitudes

Changing Your Attitude

Recognizing Distorted Thoughts 1

- **Cognitive Distortion** A self-critical, illogical pattern of thought:

Examples:

- “I didn’t get an A on that exam. I’m a failure.”
- “My girlfriend broke up with me. Well, there goes my last chance at happiness.”

Success Secret

- *Learn to recognize your self-defeating attitudes and turn them around into positive self-talk.*

Recognizing Distorted Thoughts 2

- **All-or-Nothing Thinking** –success or all doom
- **Overgeneralizing** –if bad, all bad
- **Filtering** –blocking positive inputs
- **Helpless Thinking** –nothing will make a difference
- **Self-Blame** – blaming it all on yourself
- **Personalizing** –everything has to do with you
- **Mind Reading** –assuming everyone is thinking bad thoughts.

Recognizing Distorted Thoughts 3

- **Emotional Reasoning** -assuming your negative thoughts reflect the way things really are.
- **Catastrophizing** –exaggerating the negatives of a minor event.
- **Irrational Beliefs** –distorted, self-destructive thoughts that boil down to three faulty assumptions.
 1. I must do well. (If I don't, I'm worthless.)
 2. You must treat me well. (If you don't, you must be punished.)
 3. The world must be easy. (If it isn't, it's intolerable.)

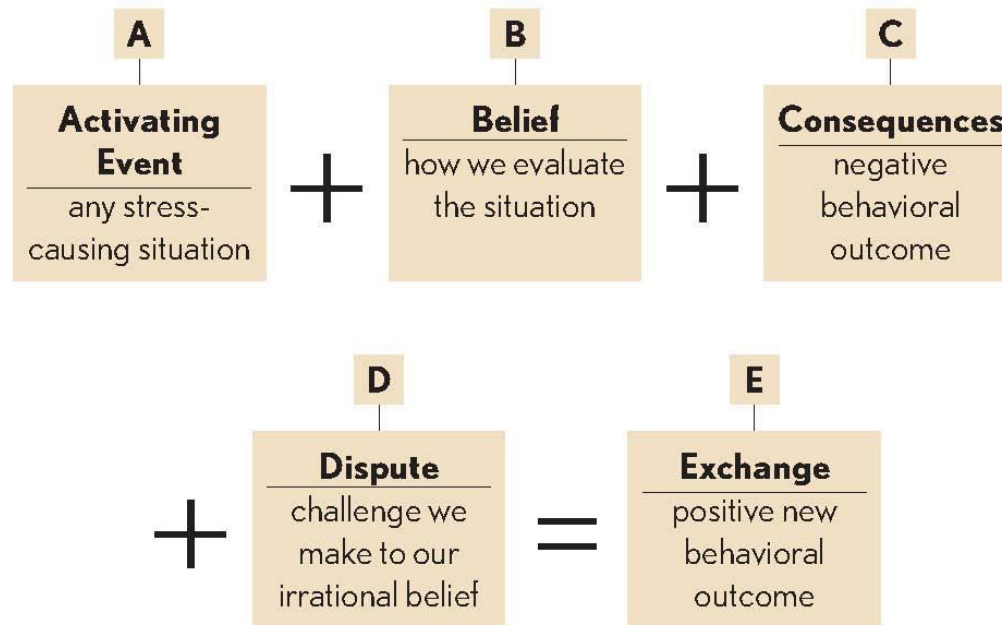
Personal Journal 5.3 From Irrational to Rational

Learning your ABCDEs

- **Adding D and E to the ABC Model**
- **D** stands for **Dispute**. *When you have a negative, irrational or exaggerated thought, ask yourself:*
 - Am I jumping to conclusions?
 - Am I exaggerating?
 - What evidence is there for this thought?
 - Is it really as bad as it seems?
 - Do I have all the facts?

The ABCDE Method

FIGURE 5.3 The ABCDE Method



Turning Beliefs Around Once we are aware of the irrational beliefs that are distorting our thinking and making us unhappy, we can use effective disputes to create healthier, more positive outcomes for ourselves. *What are some questions you can ask yourself to help dispute an irrational belief?*

Practice Makes Perfect

- **E** stands for **Exchange** –the new positive outcome you exchange for the negative one.

Success Secrets

- *Try to think in realistic terms instead of absolutes.*
- *Separate your emotional reaction from the reality of your situation.*
- *Following a healthy lifestyle is one of the most positive things you can do for yourself*

Activity 28: Disputing Negative Thoughts