

Skills 360 - Staying Positive (Part 1)

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think you are generally a positive or negative person?
2. When you fail at something, how do you deal with it?
3. What are some bad things that happened in the past year that you can now laugh about?

Vocabulary

Doom and gloom: a feeling that a situation is bad or hopeless; "It's not all doom and gloom John. Sales of some products have actually increased."

A mess: a disorganized or bad situation; "This entire project has been a mess because of a lack of leadership."

To focus on: to concentrate on or pay attention to something; "After the stock market plunge, many investors decided to focus on bonds and real estate."

Optimism: a feeling or belief that good things will happen; "Despite the recent troubles, the general public has a sense of optimism about the economy."

To work out: to end in a certain way; "Our expansion into Europe didn't work out well because of poor planning."

Mindset: a way of thinking; "If you want to succeed in sales, you need to maintain a positive mindset even through rejection."

Big picture: the complete situation or entire issue; "Instead of focusing on the small problems with the document, let's think about the big picture for a second."

Obstacle: something that stops you from doing something; "A lack of capital can be a major obstacle to small businesses that want to grow."

External: from outside, rather than inside; "The outgoing CEO blamed external factors like competition for the company's troubles."

Lack: if there is a "lack" of something, it doesn't exist or there is not enough of it; "I'd like to find a good job in marketing, but I have a lack of related work experience."

To limit: to not let something happen or to restrict something; "City bylaws limit the size and type of buildings that you can construct in certain areas."

To bomb: to do poorly or be unsuccessful; "A lot of new technologies are interesting but eventually bomb because they don't improve human lives."

Bummed out: to be sad or disappointed; "Roger seems really bummed out ever since his bad performance review."

Not the end of the world: we say that something is "not the end of the world" to mean that it's not such a big problem; "I'd like to win the award, but it's really not the end of the world if I lose."

Bump: a very small problem, difficulty, or setback; "New businesses should expect to experience some bumps in their first year."

To think back on: to remember or think about something in the past; "When I think back on my university days, I can't believe how much freedom I had."

A big deal: if something is "a big deal," it is important or major; "It bothers me that Tony doesn't think it's a big deal to be 15 minutes late for a meeting."

Done and dusted: to be finished, over, or complete; "Boy, I'll sure be glad when this big project is done and dusted. I'm ready for a vacation."

Yet to be written: we say the future is "yet to be written" to emphasize that many different things are possible; "Management made some big mistakes last year, but the future is yet to be written. Hopefully they can make some changes."

End point: the time or place where something ends or finishes; "Most economists don't see an end point to the recession in 2013."

Mental: related to the human mind and thinking; "One of the keys to good mental health is controlling your stress."

Payoff: a benefit or advantage from doing something; "One of the payoffs of doing an MBA at a big school is the great network of colleagues you develop."

Net result: the final result or effect of something or a finished process; "It was hard after the layoffs, but the net result was a leaner and more effective company."

Quality of life: the total happiness or satisfaction that a person has in life; "Sure, I made a lot of money in Tokyo, but the stress of my job seriously reduced my quality of life."

Transcript

Happy New Year to everyone and welcome back to Skills 360. I'm your host Tim Simmons and today we're going to talk about staying positive.

When you look ahead at the year to come, what do you see? Do you see great things for yourself, for your business, or for your career? Or do you see **doom and gloom**, trouble in the workplace, and a global economic **mess**? Well, I *hope* you **focus on** all the positives, even if the negatives exist. And what I want to do is to help you focus on these good things, because positive thinking can help us get where we want to go.

So what do I mean by positive thinking? Let me start by saying that it's *not* the same as **optimism**. Being optimistic means believing that everything is going to **work out** great. But positive thinking is more than that. It's a **mindset**, or a way of looking at the world and what you do. It's a belief in possibility, solutions to problems, and the **big picture**.

The opposite of positive thinking is, of course, negative thinking. Negative thinking means focusing on problems, **obstacles**, and difficulties. And most of those problems are **external**. We blame coworkers, the economy, our boss, the competition, a **lack of** money... And what's the result of all this? Limits. We limit ourselves and what we do. We think we *can't* do things before we even try. And that's no way to succeed.

Okay, so how do we think positively? First of all, we need to look at problems, mistakes, and failures as normal. Imagine you **bomb** a big job interview. A negative thinker will be **bumped out** by the fact that he didn't get the job. A positive thinker will learn from the experience. He will analyze what he did and figure out how to do it better next time. And he'll also think about what he did *well*, and try to repeat or improve on those successes. This means focusing on the big picture. That one job interview is **not the end of the world**. It's a **bump** along your career path. There are many more opportunities out there, and probably many better jobs.

One trick to positive thinking is to imagine how you'll **think back on** things that are happening now. You know from experience that the passing of time brings a fresh perspective. There are bad things that happened last year that you can probably laugh about now. You understand what was **a big deal** and what was not. Try to do that *in the present*.

Positive thinking often means separating the past and the future. A negative thinker will focus on the past, especially past failures. But the past can't be changed. It's **done and dusted**. The future, however, is **yet to be written**. And that's where the positive thinker will focus his attention. How do I do this better *next time*?

Learning is important, and we can see the power of positive thinking when it comes to problem-solving. The negative thinker looks at problems as [end points](#). He says "we *can't* do this." The positive thinker understands that there is a solution to every problem. He says "how can we solve this?" And if you *believe* there is a way to do something, then there *is* a way to do something.

Positive thinking is a [mental](#) habit. It takes practice. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves to focus on the future and on possibility. Sometimes it's hard to learn from our failures or see the big picture. But if you can do it, there are some great [payoffs](#). You'll have greater confidence and a better chance of success. And there's a lot of research to show that positive thinking actually makes us healthier. And what's the [net result](#) of these effects? Satisfaction, happiness, and a better [quality of life](#). And who doesn't want that?

We've been talking about how to *think* positively, but there's another important technique here. And that is the way we act and maintaining a positive attitude toward other people. Tune in next time to hear all about that.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the myBEonline.com website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript.

So long. And see you again soon.

Review

1. What does Tim say about "optimism?"
 - A It is actually a result of negative thinking.
 - B It is not exactly the same as positive thinking.
 - C It is a mindset or way of looking at the world.
 - D It can cause people to ignore problems.

2. Tim talks about "coworkers, the economy, our boss, the competition, and a lack of money" as examples of...
 - A ... external factors
 - B ... things a positive thinker can change
 - C ... reasons to think negatively
 - D ... problems that cannot be solved

3. Which of the following does a positive thinker do when he fails at something? [choose all that apply]
 - A Become disappointed
 - B Learn from the experience
 - C Analyze the problem
 - D Think about external factors
 - E Focus on the big picture
 - F Forget about the failure
 - G Consider who is at fault

4. One trick to positive thinking is to try to...
 - A ... attempt things that have a high chance of success.
 - B ... think about how a role model would approach problems.
 - C ... look back on things as they are happening.
 - D ... treat every problem as a potentially serious one in order to solve it.

5. According to Tim, negative thinkers focus on _____, while positive thinkers focus on _____.
 - A The present... the past
 - B Personal shortcomings... other people's potential
 - C People... ideas
 - D The past... the future

6. Which of the following does Tim mention as benefits of positive thinking? [choose all that apply]
 - A Greater leadership abilities
 - B Better relationships
 - C Greater confidence
 - D Improved quality of life
 - E Better health
 - F Higher salary
 - G Greater efficiency

Review Answers

1. What does Tim say about "optimism?"

B It is not exactly the same as positive thinking.

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A ... external factors

3. Which of the following does a positive thinker do when he fails at something?

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E Focus on the big picture

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C Greater confidence

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E Better health

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