

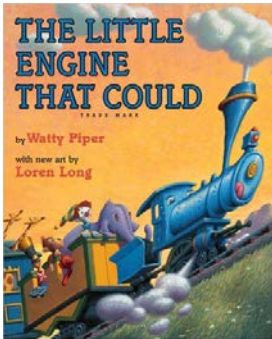
Positive Thinking seems to be in short supply these days and yet it has a huge influence on you and your ability to be happy as well make less human errors. We humans begin our young lives with an introduction to negative thinking when the most common word we hear as we learn is “NO.” Or words like: “DON’T TOUCH

THAT! “DO THAT ONE MORE TIME AND YOU’LL BE SORRY.” All this is during our imprint age of attitude growth. (DOM August 2018) One can begin to see where the tendency towards negative thinking begins. Aviation maintenance personnel have a tendency to stay on the negative side. Perhaps it’s because we spend the better part of our lives looking for something wrong. And when you find that something wrong, say in the form of severe corrosion in the aircraft wing root, is your boss or aircraft owner going to be happy with the news you give them? Very likely not. The first thing they may do is call your integrity into question. “Are you sure that it’s corroded?” “Can’t you just spray some of that green stuff (Zinc chromate) on it? Or, “how about just putting a patch over it?” The reaction is almost guaranteed to be very negative and could influence just how hard you want to look the next time.

A good boss or aircraft owner should come up later and thank you for a job well done that very possibility saved lives down the road. However that often won’t happen as they think you were just doing the job that they pay you to do.

So what is the value of positive thinking? An interesting study was done with a group of nuns. Why nuns you ask? They are one of the few groups who all experience the same lifestyle throughout their adult life. Perhaps they also work cheap? At their age of 85, the study found that 90% of the positive thinkers were still alive while 75% of the negative thinkers were dead. Now if that isn’t a motivation to think positive, nothing is. There are many other studies with roughly the same results, but lifestyle would play a greater role in those.

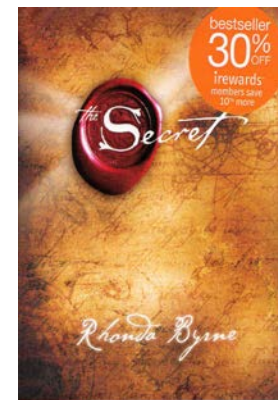
If you look back to the July 2017 article on Resiliency you may recall that positive thinking plays a key role in resilience. I mentioned a relative in that article who was given three to a maximum of six months to live. Well, the cancer finally won after over three and one-half years, but even in the hospice with less than an hour before slipping into a coma with no return, he was joking with the nurse. With his positive thinking to the very end, he said that he was not dying but moving on to a continuation of a different life and leaving his worn out body behind. He was, by far, the most cheerful person in the room.



I was introduced to positive thinking at a very young age when my dad would read me the story of a little steam engine that was tasked to pull a heavy load up a steep hill that bigger engines had felt couldn't be done. I can vaguely remember Dad puffing like a steam train as he repeated the mantra "I - think - I - can" ever faster until it reaches the hill when it became ever slower until it just makes the top of the hill and begins to say "I thought I could" as it rolls down the other side.

There are many great books written about positive thinking and its benefits with "The Secret" being an excellent one. In 2006, Rhonda Byrne produced a movie by that name and followed it up with a best selling book by the same name.

The secret is very simply, "think positive and positive things will happen to you." It speaks of the law of attraction that specifies that what you think about most will be attracted to you. Over 20 million books have been sold and you can still buy it today on Amazon.



Napoleon Hill is often called the father of positive thinking after he wrote the book; "Think And Grow Rich." The Secret, the work of Tony Robbins with his best seller "Unlimited Power" and many others has as their foundation, this 1937 book that has sold over 15 million copies and is listed in the top 10 self help books ever printed. One of Hill's more famous sayings; "*Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve*" is simply positive thinking. While, "*the positive mind is like a magnet. It attracts what it thinks about most,*" speaks to the law of attraction found in The Secret.

A fascinating book called "Dark Days", written by Randy Blythe, lead singer for the heavy metal band "Lamb of God", is a powerful modern day example of how positive thinking can help preserve your sanity.

Randy was arrested in 2012 in Prague and charged with manslaughter after a young fan had fallen off the stage and died of head injuries at one of his concerts years before. He was imprisoned in a notorious prison built in 1885. During the Nazis occupation, over 1000 resistance fighters were executed there with a guillotine he walked by on his way to the showers. The prosecutor in the case was determined to make a name for himself and set about breaking his spirit. He was put in a cell with a Mongolian that didn't speak a word of English. With nothing to do he set about teaching his cellmate English while feeling totally isolated from the outside world. With his positive outlook on life he recounts in great detail the glorious feeling of the warm water during his weekly 5 minute shower with a group of rather unsavory strangers. Now, when I shower, I often think how fortunate I am to be able to do so when I want for as long as I want. They put a second Mongolian in the cell, hoping to isolate him further, but they managed to be friends and even joke. After 37 long days he was finally granted bail and returned to America where he was advised not to return to the Czech Republic for the trial. He felt that he had to do the right thing and did return. For the results, you can read this interesting almost 500 page book that illustrates how positive thinking enables an inner resilience to overcome all obstacles.

So how do we shift or focus from negative to positive thinking?

Start by working on focusing what you want to do or accomplish and NOT what you don't want to do. It is not an overnight change, but requires a lot of repetition to succeed.

Step one. Take the time to be thankful for what you have even if it should happen to be that you are blessed to have two useful hands and feet. There are many that no longer have that yet are still positive with their life. I am thankful every day that I am blessed to still have "most of my marbles" even though the eyesight is fading. Everyone has things to be thankful for. Do this every day as you look in the mirror every morning.

Step Two. Set out to improve or do better every day. Like the little engine that could, you want to strive to improve and work toward a goal.

Step Three. Take the time to laugh. If on some days this seems difficult, at least smile. Mother Theresa was quoted as saying that peace begins with a smile. That includes inner peace so practice it.

Step Four. Give back to others. Even a simple "good job" or "looks good" can help make the other person's day IF it is genuine. If we can "pay it forward" you will get a lot of satisfaction from it, making you a winner.

Step Five. DO IT and keep doing it until it becomes habit. We live in a world where instant gratification is the expectation. Changing a life long tradition will take time.

Can you do better? Of course we all can if we don't give up.

Attached is a poem my mother loved that I hope gives you food for thought. It does for me.

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR

Should our dreams come true
In the span of years called life,
And we feel like a queen every day,
We should go to a mirror and look at ourselves,
And see what the face has to say.

For it isn't our brother, sister or friend,
Whose judgment we must pass,
The one who counts most in our life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

That is the one we have to please
For it is with us right to the end;
Life can be very sweet,
If the face we see is our friend.

We don't have to worry what other folks say or do,
We don't have to copy or sigh,
As long as our mirror smiles back at us –
As we look it straight in the eye.

We can fool the world down the pathway of years,
And get praise now and then as we pass,
But if we pretend we are something we are not,
“We have cheated the face in the glass.”