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## 6 Ways to Help You Stop Being Negative. #3 Really Worked for Me.

**Why am I so negative all the time?**

**That's the question I've wrestled with for years. I know that as a leader at work, at home and in the community that I should be looking for the good in people and in situations.**

**I'm still a work in progress (aren't we all), but I've turned a corner due to one huge revelation.**

Looking for the good in people is not a natural thing. We are wired to look for threats. I believe in micro-evolution. It's real. Just look at what modern technology has done to the brain. Over the course of thousands of years, we've evolved to look for threats to our survival and well-being. In other words, being negative, seeing the worst in others and situations, is a survival mechanism.

For some, it's the entire basis of their career.

### **The accountant**

Our accountant is amazing. He has saved us literally tens of thousands of dollars in taxes in the past few years. One of the ways he does that is by spotting errors. He is trained to look for what is wrong. For eight-plus hours a day, five days a week (that's one-third of his waking hours), his brain is in error-finding mode.

So what happens when he gets home?

His son brings him the test result...he got a 94%! What does the accountant notice? The errors, of course.

He notices the dishes left in the sink, but not the newly cleaned bathroom.

He points out that the couch is off-center, his favorite dinner doesn't taste quite right, and the vent is making a funny sound. His wife didn't even notice those things. Arguments ensue. The accountant is deemed to be a negative person.

Now, I don't know if that is true of our accountant. But it is true for many. They have trained themselves to see the errors in the world.

So have most of us. We scan for what is wrong, not what is right. We scan for "suspicious threats," not seeing the beauty of diversity. We look for brokenness and never see what is satisfactorily put together.

Looking for the good at home, at work, and in the world is not contingent upon being born positive. I don't believe that for one second.

It is a matter of training.

So how do we change our lens? How do we see more positive things?

We train ourselves. You must be *intentional* about creating new habits.

## **6 ways to train yourself to see the good and be more positive**

### **1. Recall positive events.**

One way to start to rewire your brain is to simply recall events that you have already deemed as positive. It alters your mood in the right way.

Spend a few minutes each morning or throughout the day just thinking of a past positive event.

### **2. Set reminders.**

Set a simple reminder to scan the world for positives. This is 2014. Gone are the days of a rubber band around the wrist. Today, you can set a reminder every hour on your phone that nudges you to think and see positively.

If you do this ten to twenty times a day, not only will it make your day better, but it will rewire your brain long-term.

### **3. Stop watching the news.**

The news teaches you to do one thing: look for negative drama. You know the saying "if it bleeds, it leads." But here's a news flash for you: Most celebrities weren't arrested this week. Most people weren't murdered. Most politicians actually care about the people they serve. Most people aren't being foreclosed on. Most people have jobs.

If you want to fight the natural tendency to see the negative in the world, the least you can do is stop feeding it more negative crap.

### **4. Celebrate small positives in a big way.**

When a child uses the potty for the first time, do you pat him or her on the back and say "Good job. Keep it up." No! You go crazy. High fives are flying. You cheer and dance. Grandma gets a phone call.

We should act like that more often.

When a team member does something well, celebrate wildly. When your child brings home 5 A's and a B, a special dinner is in order.

Celebrating the small positives in a big way reinforces their memory in our brains, which helps us to be more positive going forward. Make it a habit to make a big deal out of little successes.

## **5. Keep the negative to yourself.**

This could be the first step because it's the very least you can do, for yourself and others.

It's a simple thing to do, yet very hard to remember. Don't verbalize your negative feelings and thoughts.

Three things happen when you verbalize these thoughts. It reinforces it in your mind, it spreads them like a virus, and you might just get acceptance.

So [shut up](#). Don't speak your thoughts out loud for you or anyone else to hear.

## **6. Share the positive often.**

The opposite of #5 is to share the positive stuff with anyone who will listen.

At dinner each night, talk about the little positives you celebrated that day. Share how you were feeling negative when a reminder went off that changed your perspective. At a team meeting, tell how you saw the positive in a particularly difficult customer.

Be an inspiration to others with your stories and, in turn, they will do the same for you. You can create a cycle of positivity instead of a cycle of negativity.

You now have six ways to be more positive and to see more positive in the world. You can reverse the tendency to all see threats and errors. In doing so, you can and will live a life filled with joy, peace, and influence.

***What would you add to this list? What have you done to be more positive and see more good in the world?***