



October Wellness Tip:

Power of Positive Thinking

We probably all know people who see the positive side of a situation (the glass half full) and others who tend to focus on the negative side (the glass half empty). With any event, person, issue, or challenge there are always the two sides.

When we practice focusing on the good side, there are corresponding positive impacts on both our mental and physical health!

Mental benefits include:

- Stronger coping skills
- Less depression
- Ability to think clearer
- Greater creativity
- Increased problem-solving skills
- Better mood

Physical benefits include:

- Better sleep
- Lower blood pressure
- Stronger immune system
- Better stress management
- Higher pain tolerance
- Better health and longer life span

Is the glass half empty or half full?

If you tend to focus on the negative, there is good news: learning to find and focus on the positive is a ***skill you can learn***. It's not just a personality trait that you either have or don't have.

The first step is to simply notice when you are being negative. Then STOP. Find the good in the situation or person and focus on that.

Sometimes it can be challenging to find something good in a bad situation but there is ALWAYS some good that can come out of it. Perhaps it is a lesson learned, or in the event of a death it can be a greater appreciation for those alive. Or it might be realizing your strength or resilience.

Reframe the situation. For example, if you are stuck in a traffic jam, use the time to practice deep breathing, or listen to music, or focus on what you are grateful for.

Last month's tip was on keeping a gratitude journal so if you are doing this, that will help you develop a more positive attitude.

What if the glass is empty?

I'll be honest. One time I struggled to see the glass half full or even have one drop! It was post-war in Kosovo and a woman (previously widowed) had one child who had been killed and her house was destroyed. Sitting on the floor of the shed she was now living in, I had to think long and hard about where the drop was.

Then I found it! She was alive. That was a good place to start.

Whatever we focus on grows, so then this lady and I got talking about the wonderful memories she had of her son (and will always have), as well as the time spent with him. We talked about the war ending and her community being able to start re-building. We focused on the hope for a peaceful future.

Soon, the glass had many drops – in fact it was becoming at least half-full!

Only you have the power to control your thoughts, so it is in your hands. Make a concerted effort to practice positive thinking as there is great power in that, and sooooo worth the effort!

A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events and outcomes. It is a catalyst and it sparks extraordinary results.

- Wade Boggs

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