



KEYS TO EMBRACING AGING Attitude Is Everything...Be Positive

Amy F. Hosier, Assistant Professor of Family Sciences, University of Kentucky
LaVona S. Traywick, Associate Professor of Gerontology, University of Arkansas
Erin Yelland, Doctoral Student, Family Sciences, University of Kentucky

Because the connection between the mind and body is so strong, an overall positive attitude, including an upbeat outlook on life, can affect overall happiness, health and well-being. Similar to eating well and getting plenty of exercise, good health practices should be a habit that starts early in life (Phillips and Ferguson, 2013). A positive attitude can impact mental health and physical functioning including the ability to fight disease and infection. Attitude can also affect relationships and social networks and can help make success in life more likely. The bottom line: being more positive across the lifespan causes less stress and enables people to live healthier, happy lives (Lawson, 2009; Mayo Clinic, 2011; White, 2012).

Attitude affects:

- How successful you are in achieving your academic, work and personal goals.
- How you feel and look mentally and physically.
- What you do and say.

Do you have a positive attitude?

- Are you optimistic, easygoing or extroverted?
- Are you willing to learn no matter how difficult it is?
- Do you laugh a lot or have a sense of humor by not taking yourself too seriously?
- Do you express emotions rather than bottle them up?
- Do you do your best when studying/working and try to improve how you do your work?
- Do you demonstrate enthusiasm in whatever you say and do?
- Do you welcome challenges, experiments or try new ideas?

DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- Be confident.
- Be positive.
- Be patient.
- Be a goal setter.
- Be a hard worker.
- Be fun (don't take yourself too seriously).
- Be accepting of change.

ACCEPTING CHANGE

Being able to accept and adapt to change plays an important role in having a positive attitude (Levy et al., 2002), especially as life is filled with ups and downs. A positive attitude allows you to meet such challenges – both the good and bad – with less resistance. In this position, you are much more open to learn from mistakes, research what it is you may want or see the possibility of new and/or better opportunities. When you approach change with rigid thoughts or feelings of apprehension, strain and stress are more likely to result, leaving you overwhelmed and more susceptible to a sense of failure and even depression.

DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY

According to Martin Seligman, Ph.D., the creator of positive psychology, everybody has a right to be happy. Dr. Seligman also believes that happiness helps provide a sense of purpose in life because it is something that we can create and nurture. The Pursuit of Happiness organization has identified seven habits of happy people. Happy people:

- Build close relationships
- Care for others
- Engage in healthy, active lifestyles
- Embrace spirituality
- Practice positive thinking
- Embrace a hobby or activity
- Identify strengths

ATTITUDE AND AGING

A positive attitude about growing old throughout the lifespan can help you live longer, yet we grow up in a society that constantly reinforces negative stereotypes of old age and aging. We grow up thinking that old age is terrible. We associate “old” with senility, crankiness and frailty. When primed with such negativity throughout life, we are more likely to believe such stereotypes and live up to those low expectations, thus performing at lower functioning levels in old age. It is therefore important that we recognize and value the contributions, accomplishments and wisdom of senior adults. Such a societal change in attitude towards aging will affect both today’s and tomorrow’s seniors for the better. When armed with a sense of happiness and purpose, older adults are more apt to suppress negative thoughts and carry on as competent and productive members of society, regardless of age or ability.

CONCLUSION

Everyone has a bad day, but in general, a positive attitude and happy outlook can help pull you through life’s challenges. Such an upbeat and proactive outlook on life, over time, can contribute to better health, optimal aging and longevity.

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Are you positively charged?

Directions: Write the response that most clearly represents your attitude, most of the time.
For the best results, go with your first reaction.

(3) Mostly Yes (2) Sometimes (1) Mostly No

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. _____ Are you friendly? | 21. _____ Do you tolerate other people's beliefs? |
| 2. _____ Do you try not to complain? | 22. _____ Can you stop yourself from sulking when you don't get your way? |
| 3. _____ Can you be optimistic when others aren't? | 23. _____ Are you a good listener? |
| 4. _____ Do you have a sense of duty and responsibility? | 24. _____ Are you the kind of friend you would like others to be? |
| 5. _____ Do you control your temper? | 25. _____ Can you disagree without being disagreeable? |
| 6. _____ Do you speak well of your employer or your instructor? | 26. _____ Are you normally on time? |
| 7. _____ Do you feel well most of the time? | 27. _____ Do you consider yourself to be a courteous driver? |
| 8. _____ Do you follow directions willingly, asking questions when necessary? | 28. _____ Do you usually speak well of others? |
| 9. _____ Do you keep your promises? | 29. _____ Can you take being criticized without feeling hurt or resentful? |
| 10. _____ Are you organized? | 30. _____ Do you generally look at the bright side of things? |
| 11. _____ Do you admit to your mistakes? | 31. _____ Can you work with someone you dislike? |
| 12. _____ Is it easy for you to like most people? | 32. _____ Are you pleasant to others even when you aren't pleased about something? |
| 13. _____ Can you stick to a boring task without being forced to? | 33. _____ Are you enthusiastic about other people's interests? |
| 14. _____ Do you know your weaknesses and work to improve them? | 34. _____ Do you tend to be enthusiastic about whatever you do? |
| 15. _____ Can you take being teased? | 35. _____ Are you honest and sincere? |
| 16. _____ Do you try not to feel sorry for yourself? | |
| 17. _____ Are you courteous? | |
| 18. _____ Are you neat in your personal appearance and work habits? | |
| 19. _____ Do you respect other people's opinions? | |
| 20. _____ Can you adapt easily to new and unexpected situations? | _____ Total Score (Maximum: 105) |

Total your score, and rate yourself according this scale.

- 95-101 Your positives are positively terrific!
75-94 Your positives are admirable!
45-74 Your positives need work in certain areas.
Below 45 Your positives have almost fizzled out. Take a close look at your attitude.

Did you answer any of the survey questions with a "1"? If so, select up to five of those areas, and list them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Source: These questions, with copyright permission from the Government of Alberta, came directly from the survey, "Are You Positively Charged?". For more information on the survey and additional career planning resources and information, visit alis.alberta.ca



WEEK 1: BE POSITIVE

MONDAY		TUESDAY	
<p>TAKE THE “ARE YOU POSITIVELY CHARGED?” ATTITUDE SURVEY.</p> <p>Starting today, begin to work on your positives. For each item on your list, (a) think about how this attitude holds you back; (b) rewrite the statement as a positive; (c) promise yourself that you will react positively to a similar situation the next time it comes up. For example, if question two is on your list and you have an opportunity to complain — don't! Notice how being positive begins to make you feel. Keep up the positivity!</p>		<p>WRITE AND REFLECT ABOUT “YOUR BEST SELF.”</p> <p>When you picture yourself in the future, what characteristics do you need to achieve the ideal you? Take 10 to 15 minutes to write and reflect.</p>	
WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
<p>PICK A POSITIVE PERSONAL MANTRA.</p> <p>Choose a mantra, favorite song lyric or a line from a poem, and repeat it! Say it out loud! Tell yourself something positive.</p>		<p>BE POSITIVE.</p> <p>Is your glass half full or half empty? Be optimistic today and pay attention to language. For example, instead of saying, “I don't like chocolate ice cream.” Practice saying what you do like: “I like vanilla.”</p> <p>If someone looks good, pay the person a compliment and be sincere. Instead of saying, “You look nice.” Try, “You look nice today in that blouse; it's a pretty color on you.”</p> <p>When you are for something and react positively to others, you are channeling positive energy.</p>	
FRIDAY		SATURDAY/SUNDAY	
<p>BE THANKFUL.</p> <p>At the end of the day, write down three things for which you are thankful.</p>		<p>EMBRACE NATURE.</p> <p>Being outdoors boosts positive thinking and helps you let go of stress and negativity.</p>	<p>PRACTICE KINDNESS.</p> <p>Big or small, random acts of kindness for people you care about or strangers can have an uplifting effect.</p>
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