

The Art of Positive Exercising - Part 1

By Brian Hazelgren

For many people, 2020 has been a rough year. You may not be feeling your best, which means you might not be bringing your best to your family, your relationships, your work or business. I HEAR YOU and I understand your challenges!

We are dealing with too much at the moment. From election news, social unrest, kids out of school, people out of work, the fear of another outburst of the pandemic, and the fact that nobody knows exactly what we can expect for this holiday season with the ongoing news and threats from the government about the pandemic.

Have you had enough yet?

I know that I have. We're all facing burnout, so here are some ideas to help get you through in one piece. I decided to come up with some ideas of helping us learn how to deal with some of the challenges in life that creep in and start to bring us down.

This article - and three more parts are dedicated to 10 things you can do to bring more positivity and happiness into your life. Part 1 covers the first set of elements which are the foundation to build from. There are four parts to The Art of Positive Exercising that bring it all home and ties all 10 things together. Here we go...

1. **Challenge your negative thinking.** When you feel those negative thoughts creep into your mind, ask yourself, "Is there another more positive way I could view this?" Hundreds of studies have shown that being able to think optimistically is good for your health and well-being. Optimists are better problem solvers and better at accepting bad situations. It's not just about adopting a Pollyanna attitude and trying to talk yourself into being positive no matter what. It takes effort to learn how to rid yourself of negative thinking patterns and doesn't just happen overnight. Even when we learn how to stay away from negative thinking, it can still be a battle to "get right" and find ourselves back in the pattern of looking for ways to stay positive.

What negative thought would you like to work on? Write down one negative thought and challenge why you feel it is negative.

Take a few minutes and write down how you can turn that negative thought into a positive solution. "I hate getting out of bed everyday to go to work!" And change this way of thinking to "What can I do today to make my life better?" Part of that answer could look something like "I can ask some of my family, friends and acquaintances what jobs might be available; - or - I can communicate with the person making my life miserable and try to find some common ground to improve; - or - I can find some time to take a 15 minute break and go outside, or find a quiet spot to just think."

Write down a few ideas that will make your day flow a little better.

2. **Smile.** It might sound simplistic, but research has shown that it actually helps you feel happier. Feedback sent to the brain from facial muscles can actually impact the development of emotions and the effect is even stronger if you combine the smile with a positive thought. So smile at the next person you see!

Try smiling right now. Do you feel better? Now try smiling while looking in the mirror and see that beautiful smile that everyone love's to see on you. Notice how your mood changes when you smile.

3. **Follow your passion.** Do something you feel excited about. Volunteer for a cause you believe in or sign up for a class to learn something new. Several studies have shown that people who feel a sense of meaning in their life are healthier, live longer and have greater life satisfaction.

What are you passionate about - is it sports, dance, math, writing, reading, gardening, working with your hands, fitness, medicine, being in the great outdoors? Maybe there are several things that "float your boat" and get you excited. Are you following your passion? Whether you are - or not at this moment in your life, today you are going to write down what you love to do, and what you are passionate about.

Spend a few moments letting your mind run wild writing down what gets you excited - even if for one day, one week, one year, or the rest of the your life - what would you like to spend your time doing? Write down what you're good at, or even what you wish you could learn, and the things that hold your attention because you are passionate about it.

4. **Write in a Gratitude Journal entry every day.** This may sound a bit strange coming from me, but I like this idea. A gratitude journal is something where you can write down your thoughts and see how things that you are grateful for come true in your life. But you have to make sure to be specific. A number of studies have found that gratitude can be directly linked with positive emotions, and overall well-being and life satisfaction. What you are grateful for continues to manifest itself in positive ways in your life.

What are you grateful for? There are probably 100 things that you could think of, but for now, write down at least five things that you are grateful for. And then for the next 21 days write down something that day that made you grateful - even if you write the same thing(s) down every day. What are those things, and also write down why you are grateful.

End of Part 1.

Fast Fact: *There are probably 100 things you can think of right now to be grateful for...but lets start with five...*

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