

Positive thoughts bring on better health
By Mike DeCinti

We all have those people in our lives. You know the type, the “glass is half empty” kind. No matter what you do or what you say, they can always find the negative side of everything. You tell them how nice it is outside, but they inform you that it’s going to rain. You mention how well you’ve been doing with your new year’s fitness program and they remind you that resolutions never last. They go through their lives being negative and attempting to bring everyone else around them down to their level. And unfortunately their poor attitude often times seems to be more contagious than the alternative. Like many bad behaviors this problem is often the result of the person’s choosing to live their life this way, and repeating the action often enough that it becomes second nature.

This is by no way a new epidemic, and I am not uncovering any groundbreaking research here but I was prompted to write this article after a couple of things I heard this week. First, I attended a yoga class where our instructor Kevin led us in a series of poses based on the idea of intentions. He began the class discussing how we react to things in our life based on our intentions. He described it as a practice that is focused on how you are "being" in the present moment. Your attention is on the ever-present "now." You set your intentions based on understanding what matters most to you and make a commitment to act with those values in mind. I walked away from that class thinking about how much time and energy people can waste when they intend to let negative attitudes control their life instead of having the intention to be positive and do positive things.

The second thing was a story I found online. It’s the story of the carrot, the egg and the coffee bean. It goes like this...

A young woman went to her mother complaining about her life and how things were so hard for her. Her mother took her to the kitchen, filled three pots with water and brought them to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and the last she placed ground coffee beans. After about twenty minutes she shut off the burners and turning to her daughter she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the daughter replied.

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to adversity, they softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile, but its outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened and stiff. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, *they had changed the water.* "Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

This story points out that we all face negativity, but it is our intentions to the situation that guides how it will affect us. But it goes beyond just having a positive attitude.

Research has shown that physically ill patients who choose to be positive and share that attitude with other patients show a greater success rate in their recovery. Research points out how positive thinking is an effective way to achieve healing. Having a positive energy level reduces stress and emotional tension in the healer and in others. Positive emotions and feelings and a positive mental attitude can improve the quality of people's lives and heal their bodies of illnesses and stresses. Think about it...how often do we visit a sick friend in hopes to cheer them up?

Choosing to be positive cannot only help your mental well-being, but your physical health as well. Not to mention it makes you more pleasant to be around. So here's hoping you will be "good to the last drop."

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