

## **The Benefits of POSITIVE THINKING**

For the past six months, the country has been dealing with a pandemic, the likes of which has not been seen in 100 years. On a daily basis, nurses are on the front line caring for patients and all the while having to deal with their own stress and fear. Humans are wired to focus on the negative. Our innate negative emotions evolved from our ancestors' fight or flight instinct, which is the physiologic response to a perceived threat to survival and stress if the outcome. One approach that can be utilized to deal with these feelings is positive thinking.

Positive thinking is the practice of focusing on the good in any given situation. It does not mean you ignore reality or make light of problems. It simply means you approach the good and bad in life with the expectation that things will go well. Positive thinking with optimism is a key part of effective stress management and health.

### **BENEFITS OF POSITIVE THINKING**

- Longer life span
- Greater resistance to illness such as the common cold
- Lower blood pressure
- Better stress management
- Better coping skills
- Less depression

### **HOW TO THINK POSITIVE THOUGHTS**

- Start each day on a positive note
- Positive imagery
- Focus on the good things
- Practice gratitude
- Keep a gratitude Journal
- Open yourself to humor
- Spend time with positive people

You may be thinking you do not have the time for this right now? A simple suggestion would be to take a few minutes and review your day. Did your patient/family thank you? Did your nurse manager compliment you for an excellent job? Did your children hug you when you returned home? Did your significant other make dinner? Did your parents thank you for stopping by? Did your older neighbor/grandparents thank you for picking up groceries for them? Instead of focusing on the negative things that occurred in the day, think about the good thing that happened, and that is the start of positive thinking.

**We wish you well on your Healthy Nurse journey!**

**Eleanor Dietrich-Withington, MA, RN and the Healthy Nurse Healthy New Jersey team**

References

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