



Is the glass half full?

How you answer that question can impact your health!

Positive thinking may reflect a sense of optimism and your attitude toward health. Thinking positively may also assist with stress management. Utilizing effective stress management may have many health benefits.

If you see the glass half-empty, you can learn positive thinking skills. It begins with self-talk, which is the consistent stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head. Listen to your internal dialogue for positive or negative thoughts. If your thoughts are mostly negative, you may tend to be more pessimistic. If your thoughts are mostly positive, then you are likely an optimist.

Researchers continue to study the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Some of the health benefits one may receive include:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of stress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physical well-being
- Reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress

There are theories about the cause of these benefits to health however the exact etiology is unknown. Researchers speculate that it may be the positive attitude leads to healthier lifestyles.

You can learn to think more positively. It is simple but will take practice and time. Here are some suggestions to think and behave more positively:

- Identify areas to change. If you think negatively about one aspect of your life such as work, find one idea to turn positive and then build on that.
- Be open to humor. Give yourself permission to find humor in your everyday life and especially during difficult times. Laughing reduces the feelings of stress.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle. Exercise at least 3 times per week to have a positive effect on mood and reduce stress.
- Surround yourself with positive people. Have positive, supportive people close to you that you can depend on for helpful advice and feedback.
- Practice positive self-talk. Start by speaking to yourself as you would speak to a friend. Be gentle and encouraging to yourself.
- Find the good things in your life and express a sense of heartfelt gratitude for them.

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